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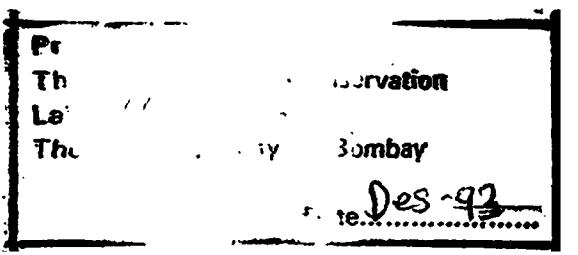

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INSTITUTES OF METAPHYSIC

THE

THEORY OF KNOWING AND BEING

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CONTENTS.

	Page
RODUCTION.	
1. The word "philosophy" as here employed,	1
2. The two main requisitions of philosophy,	*ib.*
3. Which of them is the more stringent,	2
4. The value of systems determined by a reference to these requisitions,	*ib.*
5. An unreasoned system of no value, because at variance with definition of philosophy,	*ib.*
6. Because, though true, it cannot be certain,	3
7. Because of no use as a mental discipline,	*ib.*
8. A reasoned system, though not true, has some value as an exercise of reason,	*ib.*
9. It complies more closely with definition of philosophy than the other,	4
10. But a system should be both true and reasoned,	*ib.*
11. Systems of philosophy are unreasoned,	5
12. The present state of philosophy described,	*ib.*
13. *First*, How is this state to be *explained*? *Secondly*, How *remedied*?	6
14. First, it is explained (§§ 14-31) *by* philosophy not being reasoned,	7
15. No good can be expected so long as philosophy is not reasoned,	*ib.*
16. The masks of philosophy,	8
17. Its unsatisfactory state further accounted for. The globe of speculation,	10
18. Explanation continued. *First* principles always come out *last*,	12
19. Illustrations of this from language and grammar,	*ib.*
20. Illustration continued,	13
21. Illustration from logic,	14
22. Illustration from law,	*ib.*
23. Application to philosophy. Here, too, *first* principles come out *last*,	15
24. These principles, though operative in philosophy, are unnoticed and unknown,	16
25. Hence philosophy is nowhere a scheme reasoned throughout,	17
26. The reputation of necessary truths, a further retarding cause,	19
27. What necessary truth is,	*ib.*
28. Its criterion is "the law of contradiction." Law explained,	20
29. Its criterion is *not* ready acceptance,	22
30. Return. Philosophy deals with necessary truths—therefore retarded by their proscription,	*ib.*

Page

31. How ill the necessary truths have fared in Germany and in our own country, ... 23
32. *Secondly*, How is the unsatisfactory state of philosophy to be *remedied*? Short answer, ... 24
33. A remedial system uniting truth and reason, not impossible, . . 25
34. Single canon for the right use of reason, ... 26
35. This system of Institutes claims both truth and demonstration, but rather demonstration than truth, ... 27
36. It is a body of necessary truth. Its pretensions stated, . . . ib.
37. An objection to its method stated and obviated, ... 28
38. The polemical character of this system, ... 29
39. Why philosophy must be polemical. She exists only to correct the inadvertencies of ordinary thinking, ... ib.
40. This might be abundantly proved by the testimony of philosophers, 30
41. The object (or business to do) of philosophy renders her essentially polemical, ... 31
42. The charge of disrespect which might be supposed to attach to philosophy on account of her polemical character, obviated, . . ib.
43. This system also adverse to psychology—and why, ... 32
44. *What* philosophy has *to do*, again distinctly stated, . . . 33
45. Its positive object still more distinctly stated. Definition of metaphysics, 34
46. *Why* philosophy undertakes this object, ... 35
47. *How* philosophy goes to work. Adherence to canon—proposition and counter-proposition, ... ib.
48. Further explanations as to *how* philosophy goes to work, . . 37
49. Advantages of this method, ... 38
50. Disadvantages of not contrasting distinctly the true and the false, . 39
51. General unintelligibility of systems is due to their neglect to exhibit this contrast, ... 40
52. This system contrasts distinctly the true and the false, ... 42
53. The three sections of this institute. Arrangement explained and proved to be essential (§§ 54-62), ... 43
54. The section called *ontology* naturally comes *first*,—but is truly *last* in order, ... ib.
55. It must be made to revolve away from us, in order to bring round the *epistemology*, which, though it naturally comes last, is truly first in order, ... 45
56. *Epistemology* and *ontology* the two main divisions of philosophy, . 46
57. The epistemology does of itself afford no entrance to ontology. Why not? 47
58. Because "Absolute Existence" may be that which we are ignorant of, ib.
59. This consideration necessitates a new section of philosophy called the *agnoiology*. Its business, ... 48
60. Now we can settle the problem of ontology—and how, . . . ib.
61. Recapitulation of the three sections. 1. Epistemology. 2. Agnoiology. 3. Ontology. This arrangement not arbitrary, but necessary, . 49
62. The necessity of keeping these divisions perfectly distinct, . . ib.
63. The natural oversights of thought are rectified in these three sections, 50
64. Remarks obviating any objections to the system, on the ground that its conclusions cannot at all times be present to the mind, . . 51
65. Continuation of these remarks, ... 53
66. Remark obviating any objection to this system on the score of presumption, 55

Page
67. The indispensable exemption of the necessary laws to *all* reason, . . 56
68. An objection to the system on the score of inconsistency obviated, . 57
69. Objection retorted: The confusion of philosophers in regard to the conceivable and the inconceivable, ... 58
70. This confusion illustrated, ... 59
71. All other systems make game of the laws of thought, ... 60
72. The inconsistency of philosophers inextricable, ... 61
73. Their laws of thought always turn out, at best, to be mere laws of imagination, ... *ib.*
74. This system does not make game of the laws of thought, . . . 62
75. It abridges the grounds of controversy, ... 63
76. Conclusion of introduction explaining how the starting-point of philosophy is reached (§§ 76-85), ... 64
77. How the starting-point is reached, ... *ib.*
78. Plato, in Theætetus, fails to reach the starting-point, ... 65
79. Search for the starting-point, ... 66
80. Why the question—What is knowledge? cannot be the starting-point, 67
81. This question resolved into two questions, ... 68
82. Which of them is *our* question,—and the first in philosophy, . . 69
83. That philosophy has a starting-point is proved by the fact that its starting-point has been found, ... 70
84. Starting-point must state the essential of knowledge. Experience may confirm, but reason alone can establish its truth, ... *ib.*
85. Re-statement of the first or proximate question of philosophy, . . 71
86. Its answer is the absolute starting-point, and forms the *first proposition* of these Institutes, ... *ib.*

SECTION I.

THE EPISTEMOLOGY, OR THEORY OF KNOWING.

PROPOSITION I.

THE PRIMARY LAW OR CONDITION OF ALL KNOWLEDGE, ... 75

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... *ib.*

1. Prop. I. answers the first question of philosophy, ... *ib.*
2. It expresses the most general and essential law of all knowledge, . 76
3. It declares that self-consciousness is never entirely suspended when the mind knows anything, ... 77
4. Objection that self-consciousness seems at times to be extinct, . . *ib.*
5. Objection obviated: Proposition explained, ... *ib.*
6. Our apparent inattention to self accounted for by the principle of familiarity, ... 78
7. Also by the consideration that the *ego* is no object of sensible experience, 80
8. A theory of self-consciousness at variance with Prop. I. refuted, . . 81
9. Importance of Prop. I. as foundation of the whole system, . . . 82
10. It is not refuted but rather confirmed by experience, ... 83
11. Its best evidence is reason; which fixes it as a necessary truth or axiom, *ib.*
12. *First counter-proposition*, ... 85

Page
13. It embodies the result of ordinary thinking and of popular psychology. . 85
14. It is generally the starting-point of psychology, as Prop. I. is the starting-point of metaphysics, ... 86
15. A mark of distinction between the propositions and the counter-propositions, ... 87
16. Prop. I. has some affinity to Pythagorean doctrine of numbers, . . 88
17. Misunderstanding as to Pythagorean doctrine, ... 89
18. Prop. I. a higher generalisation of the Pythagorean law, . . 90
19. Anticipations of Prop. I. by the philosophers of Germany, . . . *ib.*

PROPOSITION II.

The Object of all Knowledge, ... 93
Demonstration, ... *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, ... 94
1. Reason for printing "itself-in-union-with-whatever-it-apprehends" as one word, ... *ib.*
2. By the object of knowledge is meant the whole object of knowledge, . 95
3. Change which an attention to the *condition* of knowledge effects upon the *object* of knowledge, ... 96
4. Further illustrated by the speculative as distinguished from the ordinary mode of enumeration, ... *ib.*
5. *Second Counter-proposition*, ... 97
6. It is false, because counter-proposition I. is false, ... 98
7. It expresses the ordinary notion, and also, generally, the psychological opinion as to the object of knowledge, ... 99

PROPOSITION III.

The Inseparability of the Objective and the Subjective, . . . 101
Demonstration, ... *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, ... 102
1. Reasons for giving this proposition a prominent place in the system, . *ib.*
2. What is meant by separability and inseparability in cognition, . . 103
3. A possible misapprehension obviated, ... 104
4. Inseparability in cognition not to be confounded with inseparability in space: the external and the internal, ... *ib.*
5. The unit of cognition explained. How it is determined, . . . 106
6. Importance of the words "by itself," or *per se*, ... 107
7. The unit of cognition further explained, ... *ib.*
8. No essential but only an accidental difference between the *minimum* and the *maximum* of cognition, ... 108
9. *Third Counter-proposition*, ... 109
10. It embodies an inadvertency of natural thinking, ... *ib.*
11. The psychological position more false and ambiguous than the natural inadvertency, ... 110
12. The psychological error accounted for, ... *ib.*
13. Distinction of science of mind and science of matter characterised, . 111
14. Invalidity of counter-proposition III. Its origin, §§ 14, 15, 16, . . 112
15. Many things are distinguishable, which are not separable, in cognition, *ib.*
16. Illustrations applied to subject and object, ... 113

Page
17. Further illustration, 114
18. Short statement of what this proposition contends for, 115
19. No opinion offered as to existence, ib.

PROPOSITION IV.

Matter per se, 117
Demonstration, ib.
Observations and Explanations, 118
1. Idealism and materialism have their roots here, ib.
2. *Fourth Counter-proposition*, ib.
3. It expresses common opinion as to our knowledge of matter *per se*, ib.
4. Oversight of self only apparent—not real and total, 119
5. Psychological opinion as to our knowledge of matter *per se*, ib.
6. Psychological materialism as founded on the four counter-propositions, 120
7. Fallacy of materialism. Possibility of idealism as founded on four propositions, 121
8. A preliminary question prejudged by materialist and by idealist, 122
9. Cause of this precipitate judgment. Its evil consequences, 123
10. How Prop. IV. decides this preliminary question. How Counter-proposition IV. decides it, 124
1. Symbols illustrative of the position maintained by the Institutes, ib.
2. The same symbols as illustrative of the psychological position, 125
3. Different conclusions from the two positions, 126
4. Difference further explained, ib.
5. Another point of difference between this system and psychology, 127
6. Matter *per se* reduced to the contradictory, 130
7. This contradiction attaches not only to our knowledge of matter *per se*, 131
But to matter *per se* itself, 133
Advantage of this reduction. New light on the problem of philosophy, 134
Importance of finding the contradictory, 136
In what sense the contradictory is conceivable, 137
Matter *per se* is not a nonentity, 138

POSITION V.

ITER AND ITS QUALITIES PER SE, 140
MONSTRATION, ib.
ERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS. ib.
1. Why Proposition V. is introduced, ib.
2. *Fifth Counter-proposition*, 141
3. Distinction between the primary and the secondary qualities of matter, 142
4. Character of the secondary qualities, ib.
5. Character of the primary qualities, 144
6. Defects of this distinction, 145
7. It runs into a contradiction, 147
8. Psychological conception of idealism, ib.
9. Psychological refutation of idealism, 148
10. This refutation, if logically conclusive, is founded on a contradiction, and therefore cannot be accepted, 150
11. The distinction of the primary and secondary qualities should be abandoned as useless, or worse, 151

Page

PROPOSITION VI.

THE UNIVERSAL AND THE PARTICULAR IN COGNITION, . . . 152
DEMONSTRATION, ... 153
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... *ib.*
1. Explanation of words, ... *ib.*
2. In what sense the contingent element is necessary, and in what sense it is contingent, ... 154
3. Why this proposition is introduced, ... 156
4. Question concerning the particular and the universal instead of being made a question of Knowing, ... 157
5. Was made a question of Being by the early philosophers. Thales, . 158
6. Parmenides. What change he effected on the question, . . . 159
7. It still related to Being—not to Knowing, ... 160
8. Indecision of Greek speculation. The three crises of philosophy, . 161
9. Plato appeared during the second crisis. His aim, ... 163
10. The coincidence of the known and the existent must be proved, not guessed at, ... *ib.*
11. Plato's deficiencies, ... 164
12. His merits. The question respecting the particular and the universal demands an entire reconsideration, ... 165
13. A preliminary ambiguity, ... 166
14. Further statement of ambiguity, ... 167
15. Illustrations of the ambiguity, ... 168
16. Is the Platonic analysis of cognition and existence a division into *elements* or into *kinds?* 168
17. Rightly interpreted, it is a division into elements, ... 170
18. It has been generally mistaken for a division into kinds, . . . 171
19. Explanation of this charge, ... 172
20. *Sixth Counter-proposition*, ... 173
21. This counter-proposition is itself a proof of the charge here made against philosophers, ... 174
22. Review of our position, ... 175
23. Misinterpretation of the Platonic analysis traced into its consequences, 176
24. Perplexity as to general existences, ... 177
25. Realism, ... 178
26. Realism is superseded by Conceptualism, ... 179
27. Conceptualism is destroyed by Nominalism, ... 180
28. Evasion by which conceptualism endeavours to recover her ground, and to conciliate nominalism. Its failure, ... 181
29. Nominalism, ... 182
30. Nominalism is annihilated by Proposition VI., ... 183
31. The summing up, ... 184
32. The abstract and the concrete, ... 185

PROPOSITION VII.

WHAT THE UNIVERSAL AND THE PARTICULAR IN COGNITION ARE, . . . 191
DEMONSTRATION, ... *ib.*
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... 192
1. Why this Proposition is introduced, ... *ib.*

Page

2. The ego is coextensive with the universal, matter is not coextensive with the particular, element, ... 193
3. Another reason for introducing this proposition, ... 194
4. Remarkable that this proposition should not have been propounded long ago, ... *ib.*
5. The oversight accounted for. Effect of familiarity, ... 195
6. We study the strange rather than the familiar, hence truth escapes us, . . 197
7. Hence neglect of this proposition, ... 199
8. Another circumstance which may have caused the neglect of this proposition, ... 201
9. The ego is the *summum genus* of cognition. Ontological generalization, *ib.*
10. Epistemological generalisation is very different, ... 202
11. The ego not a *mere* generalisation from experience, ... 204
12. Shortcoming of the Platonic ideas, ... 205
13. Perhaps the ego is the *summum genus* of existence as well as of cognition, 207
14. The second clause of proposition has had a standing in philosophy from the earliest times, ... 208
15. A ground of perplexity, ... *ib.*
6. Demur as to matter being the fluctuating in existence, ... 209
7. It is certainly the fluctuating in cognition, ... 210
8. The old philosophers held it to be both, ... *ib.*
9. More attention should have been paid to their assertion that it was the fluctuating in cognition, ... 211
). Matter as the fluctuating in cognition: explained, ... 212
. This is the fluctuation which epistemology attends to, ... *ib.*
. A hint as to its fluctuation in existence, ... 213
. The ego as the non-fluctuating in cognition—explained, ... 214
4. *Seventh Counter-proposition*, ... *ib.*
5. Expresses the contradictory inadvertency of ordinary thinking: illustration, ... 215
Corrective illustration, ... 216
Psychology adopts Counter-proposition VII., ... 217
And thereby loses hold of the only argument for immateriality, . . . 218

)SITION VIII.

Ego in Cognition, ... 219
NSTRATION, ... *ib.*
ERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... 221
1. A *caveat*, ... *ib.*
2. Important law of knowledge, ... *ib.*
3. Materiality and immateriality. *Eighth Counter-proposition*, . . . 222
4. Eighth counter-proposition the common property of materialist and spiritualist, ... 223
5. Early conception of mind as material. Ghosts, *clairvoyance*, spirit-rapping, ... 224
6. Conception of mind as material substance dismissed, ... 226
7. Conception of mind as result of organisation: phrenology, . . . *ib.*
8. The spiritualist's conception of mind is as null as the materialist's, . 227
9. Both parties hold mind to be *particular*, ... 228
10. It is known only as the universal, ... 229

11. The materialist's error consists in his holding mind to be *particular*, . 230
12. The spiritualist's error consists in his holding mind to be *particular*, . 231
13. The two errors summed up, ... 232
14. Recapitulation of the Institutional proof of immateriality, . . . 233

PROPOSITION IX.

THE EGO PER SE, ... 235
DEMONSTRATION, ... *ib.*
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... 236
1. Purport of this proposition in relation to Proposition I., . . . *ib.*
2. An objection started, ... *ib.*
3. Objection obviated, ... 237
4. Another objection obviated, ... 238
5. David Hume outgoes this proposition, ... 239
6. What this proposition contends for, ... 240
7. The mind must always know itself *in*, but not *as*, some determinate condition, ... *ib.*
8. *Ninth Counter-proposition*, ... 242
9. Its twofold error, ... *ib.*
10. History of word "essence." Its meaning reversed by moderns, . 243
11. Consequence of this reversal—injustice to the old philosophers, . 244
12. Confusion and error to which the reversal has led, . . . 245
13. This proposition reduces the ego *per se* to a contradiction, . . 246
14. Why the word ego is used in these discussions, ... 247
15. The individual or monad, ... *ib.*
16. An objection obviated, ... 248
17. Another objection obviated, ... 249

PROPOSITION X.

SENSE AND INTELLECT, ...
DEMONSTRATION, ...
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ...
1. Comment on *data* of proof of this proposition, ...
2. *Tenth Counter-proposition*, ...
3. The Leibnitzian restriction of counter-proposition, . . .
4. Comment on the translation here given of the counter-proposition, . 25
5. The counter-proposition is equally contradictory, whether accepted without, or with, a restriction, ... 25
6. The counter-proposition is the foundation of "sensualism"—character of sensualism; . . . . . *ib.*
7. The anti-sensual psychology merely restricts the counter-proposition—leaves the contradiction uncorrected, ... 2
8. The root of the mischief. History of distinction between sense and intellect, ...
9. Aim and procedure of Greek metaphysics, ... 2
10. A rule for the historian of philosophy, ... 2
11. This rule observed in these Institutes, ... 25
12. Return to history of distinction between sense and intellect, . . 26
13. Illustration of early Greek doctrine, ... 26

Page

4. The old philosophers were right in their problem—in their way of working it, and in fixing sense as the faculty of nonsense, . . . 263
5. A reason why the truth of this doctrine is not obvious, . . . 264
6. Difficulty and difference of opinion as to intellectual element, . . *ib.*
7. Ambiguities of the old philosophers, ... 265
8. Three misconceptions arising out of these ambiguities, . . . 266
9. Comment on first misconception, ... 267
10. Comment on second misconception, ... 268
11. Comment on third misconception, ... 269
12. Key to the Greek philosophy, ... 271
13. Return to counter-proposition. It is founded on a confusion of the distinction between sense and intellect, ... 273
14. The Lockian and the Kantian psychology in limiting the counter-proposition effect no subversion of sensualism, ... 274
15. Kant's doctrine impotent against sensualism, ... 276
16. The statement in par. 4, and the charge in par. 7, are borne out by the foregoing remarks, ... 278
17. Kant sometimes nearly right. He errs through a neglect of necessary truth, ... 279
18. The true compromise between Sense and Intellect, ... 280

PROPOSITION XI.

PRESENTATION AND REPRESENTATION, ... 283
DEMONSTRATION, ... *ib.*
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... 284
1. Why this proposition is introduced, ... *ib.*
2. Distinction between knowing and thinking, ... 285
3. This proposition the formation of a true philosophy of experience, . *ib.*
...ation—its two insuperable restrictions, ... 286
...diction by way of addition. *Second* by way of subtraction, . 287
... restriction unrecognised by philosophers. *Eleventh Counter-position*, ... 288
...validity shown, ... 289
...*minimum cogitabile* equates with the *minimum scibile*, . . *ib.*
...eid's mistake in his result on representationism, . . . 290
...ruth and the error of representationism, ... 292

...ON XII.

...E PER SE AGAIN, ... 293
...NSTRATION, ... *ib.*
...ERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... *ib.*
1. Why this proposition is introduced, ... 294
2. On what condition matter *per se* might be thought of, . . . 295
3. In attempting to think it, we must leave out an element essential to its cognition, and therefore it cannot be thought of, . . . 296
4. How the imagination leads us astray, ... *ib.*
5. Illustration, ... 297
6. Self must be represented just as much as it must be presented, . *ib.*
7. *Twelfth Counter-proposition*, ... 298

Page
8. Its character and downfall, ... 299
9. Matter *per se* has no chance of being thought of, . . . ib.
10. It cannot be reached by the way of inference, ... 300
11. Why the discussion respecting matter *per se* is important, . . ib.

PROPOSITION XIII.

The Independent Universe in Thought, ... 303
Demonstration, ... ib.
Observations and Explanations, ... 304
1. It speaks only of what can be conceived, not of what exists, . . ib.
2. It answers the question—what independent universe can be thought of? ib.
3. Why we do not think of things as amorphous when they are absent from us, ... 305
4. An objection stated, ... 306
5. Objection obviated. We have a single type—can suppose it repeated, . 307
6. Why we cannot cogitate matter *per se*—no single type, . . . ib.
7. We have a single type of objects + subject—can conceive other cases of this, ... 308
8. Further explanation of how one self can conceive another self, . . 309
9. A word on Belief, ... 311
10. Another difficulty obviated, ... ib.
11. *Thirteenth Counter-proposition*, ... 312

PROPOSITION XIV.

The Phenomenal in Cognition, ... 31
Demonstration, ... 4
Observations and Explanations, ... 9
1. *Fourteenth Counter-proposition*, ...
2. A good rule for reaching truth on metaphysical topics, .
3. The psychological trifling with truth ought to be put a stop to,
4. The main object of this and three following propositions, .

PROPOSITION XV.

What the Phenomenal in Cognition is, ...
Demonstration, ...
Observations and Explanations, ...
1. A peculiarity in the counter-proposition, ...
2. *Fifteenth Counter-proposition*, ...
3. The counter-proposition involves a contradiction, ...

PROPOSITION XVI.

The Substantial in Cognition, ...
Demonstration, ...
Observations and Explanations, ...
1. This proposition proves nothing as to *existing* substance, . . .
2. Neither does it declare the nature of known substance, . . .
3. Reasons for introducing this proposition, ...

Page
4. The position of natural thinking in regard to this proposition, . . 324
5. *Sixteenth Counter-proposition*, ... 325
6. Its downfall, ... 326
7. Defence of definition of known substance, ... *ib.*
8. This definition is due to Spinoza, ... 327

PROPOSITION XVII.

What the Substantial in Cognition is, ... 328
Demonstration, ... *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, ... 329
1. *Seventeenth Counter-proposition*, ... *ib.*
2. Conglomerate character of the counter-proposition, ... 330
3. Elimination of its ontological surplusage, ... *ib.*
4. Its contradictory character exposed in so far as it is psychological, . 332
5. The counter-proposition considered in so far as it is the product of natural thinking, ... 333
6. The exact point in the counter-proposition which natural thinking opposes to the proposition, ... 334
7. Contradiction in the counter-proposition, in so far as it is the product of natural thinking, ... *ib.*
8. Psychological opinion as to *existing* substance, ... 335
9. First, It does not answer its purpose, ... *ib.*
10. Secondly, It places before us the mere phenomenal, ... 336
11. The Institutional conception of known substance, ... 337
12. History of distinction between substance and phenomenon—its terms have been reversed, ... 338
13. Errors caused by this reversal, ... 339
14. Substance and phenomenon originally bore the signification assigned to them here, ... 340
15. The known phenomenal, according to the older systems, . . . *ib.*
16. The known substantial, according to the older systems, ... 341
17. A word upon *existing* substance and phenomenon, ... *ib.*
18. Two main ambiguities in the old systems, ... 342
19. These ambiguities accounted for, ... 344
20. And cleared up by a reference to the Institutional doctrine, . . *ib.*
21. Coincidence of the old speculations with the Institutes, . . . 346
22. An objection obviated, ... 347
23. Mistakes of the historians of philosophy as to substance, . . . 348
24. A traditional dogma about disdaining the senses, ... 349
25. The true meaning of turning the mind away from the senses, . . 350
26. What the ancient philosophers meant by this dogma, ... 351
27. Contrast between speculation and psychology in their views of substance and phenomenon, ... 352
28. Speculation proved to be right even by a reference to experience, . 354

PROPOSITION XVIII.

The Relative in Cognition, ... 355
Demonstration, ... *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, ... *ib.*

Page

1. The same error is continually reappearing under new forms—must be unmasked under all its disguises, 356
2. Hence the necessity of Props. XVIII., XIX., XX., XXI., 357
3. *Eighteenth Counter-proposition*, *ib.*
4. It is shown to be contradictory, 358

PROPOSITION XIX.

What the Relative in Cognition is, 359
Demonstration, *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, 360
1. Why the items mentioned in the proposition can be known only as the relative, *ib.*
2. *Nineteenth Counter-proposition*, *ib.*
3. Its fallacy shown, 361

PROPOSITION XX.

The Absolute in Cognition, 362
Demonstration, *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, 363
1. Nothing is affirmed as to the existing Absolute, *ib.*
2. Comment on definition of the known Absolute, *ib.*
3. *Twentieth Counter-proposition*, 364
4. This counter-proposition is a reiteration of Counter-proposition XVI., *ib.*

PROPOSITION XXI.

What the Absolute in Cognition is, 365
Demonstration, *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, 366
1. Comment on demonstration of Proposition XXI., *ib.*
2. *Twenty-first Counter-proposition*, *ib.*
3. Fruitlessness of the controversy respecting the Absolute and the Relative. The philosophical temper, 367
4. The causes of confusion in this controversy, 369
5. All men are equally cognisant of the absolute, 370
6. A reminder, *ib.*
7. Confusion might have been obviated had it been shown that all men are equally cognisant of the absolute, 371
8. The difficulty is, not to know it, but to know that we know it, *ib.*
9. Refutation of the relationist doctrine, 372
10. Kant on the Absolute, 373
11. The relation of non-contradictories and the relation of contradictories, 374

PROPOSITION XXII.

The Contingent Conditions of Knowledge, 376
Demonstration, *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, 377
1. This proposition takes us out of necessary into contingent truth, *ib.*

Page

2. It is introduced in order that the necessary may be separated from the contingent laws, ... 378
3. Why this analysis is indispensable, ... 379
4. What is required in setting about this analysis, ... *ib.*
5. The analysis illustrated, ... 380
6. The analysis illustrated, ... 381
7. It is unnecessary to carry the analysis into greater detail, ... 383
8. How these remarks qualify the doctrine of the absolute given in Proposition XXI., ... 384
9. The absolute, however, is still object + subject. The main result of the epistemology, ... *ib.*
10. *Twenty-second Counter-proposition*, ... 385
11. The chief point to be attended to in it, ... *ib.*
12. The cause of the errors of representationism pointed out, ... 386
13. The same subject continued, ... 388
14. The cause of Berkeley's errors pointed out, ... 389
15. The main result of the epistemology, ... 391
16. The importance of this result, ... 393

SECTION II.

THE AGNOIOLOGY, OR THEORY OF IGNORANCE.

PROPOSITION I.

WHAT IGNORANCE IS, ... 397
DEMONSTRATION, ... *ib.*
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... *ib.*
1. Why this proposition is introduced, ... *ib.*
2. Novelty of the agnoiology, ... 398
3. The agnoiology is indispensable, ... *ib.*
4. The plea of our ignorance a bar to ontology, ... 399
5. This obstacle can be removed only by an inquiry into the nature of ignorance, ... 400
6. *First Counter-proposition*, ... *ib.*

PROPOSITION II.

IGNORANCE REMEDIABLE, ... 403
DEMONSTRATION, ... *ib.*
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... *ib.*
1. All that this proposition proves, ... *ib.*
2. *Second Counter-proposition*, ... 403

PROPOSITION III.

WHAT THERE CAN BE IGNORANCE OF, ... 404
DEMONSTRATION, ... *ib.*
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... *ib.*

Page
1. Importance of this proposition, 405
2. Symbols illustrative of the law of ignorance, *ib.*
3. Distinction between ignorance and a nescience of the opposites of necessary truth, 406
4. There can be no ignorance of the opposites of the geometrical axioms, *ib.*
5. There can be no ignorance of the contradictory, 407
6. *Third Counter-proposition*, 408

PROPOSITION IV.

Ignorance of Objects per se, 409
Demonstration, *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, *ib.*
1. The truths now pour down fast, *ib.*
2. *Fourth Counter-proposition*—is swept away, 410

PROPOSITION V.

Ignorance of Matter per se, 411
Demonstration, *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, *ib.*
1. The main business of the agnoiology, 412
2. The disadvantage of not studying necessary truth, *ib.*
3. The doctrine of ignorance entertained by psychology and common opinion, 413
4. The advantage of studying necessary truth, *ib.*
5. The agnoiology carries out the work of the epistemology, 414
6. *Fifth Counter-proposition*, 415
7. Psychological conclusion as to our ignorance of matter *per se*, *ib.*
8. It rests on a contradictory assumption, 416
9. The psychological conclusion, therefore, is contradictory, 417
10. The origin of the psychological mistake pointed out, *ib.*
11. No ontology is possible if we can be ignorant of matter *per se*, 418

PROPOSITION VI.

Ignorance of the Universal and Particular, 420
Demonstration, *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, *ib.*
1. Effect of this proposition, 421
2. *Sixth Counter-proposition*, *ib.*
3. The error which it involves, *ib.*

PROPOSITION VII.

Ignorance of the Ego per se, 422
Demonstration, *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, *ib.*
1. Design and effect of this proposition, *ib.*
2. *Seventh Counter-proposition*, 423
3. What the agnoiology does next, *ib.*

Page

PROPOSITION VIII.

THE OBJECT OF ALL IGNORANCE, ... 424
DEMONSTRATION, ... *ib.*
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... 425
1. Relation of this proposition to Proposition II. of the epistemology, . *ib.*
2. The object of ignorance is neither nothing nor the contradictory, . 426
3. It is believed that this doctrine is new, ... 427
4. What has caused this doctrine to be missed, ... 428
5. Another circumstance which has caused it to be missed, . . . 429
6. In fixing the object of ignorance this proposition does not deny its magnitude, ... 430
7. How far the object of ignorance is definable, and how far it is not definable, ... 431
8. The advantage of discriminating the necessary from the contingent laws of knowledge, ... 432
9. This system is more humble in its pretensions than other systems, . 434
10. *Eighth Counter-proposition*, ... 435
11. The grounds on which it rests are false, ... *ib.*
12. Illustration of the difference between the speculative and the ordinary view in regard to the object of ignorance, ... 436
13. The substantial and absolute in ignorance, ... 437
14. The main result of the agnoiology shortly stated, ... 438
15. Concluding remark, ... 439

SECTION III.

THE ONTOLOGY, OR THEORY OF BEING.

PROPOSITION I.

THE THREE ALTERNATIVES AS TO ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE, ... 443
DEMONSTRATION, ... *ib.*
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... 444
1. The problem of ontology stated, ... *ib.*
2. Its three alternatives are exhaustive, ... *ib.*
3. The third alternative has to be eliminated, ... 445
4. *First Counter-proposition*, ... *ib.*
5. In what respect this counter-proposition is right, ... 446
6. In what respect it is wrong, ... 447
7. The law of excluded middle stated, ... *ib.*
8. How this law must be qualified, ... *ib.*
9. Origin of the mistake in regard to this law, ... 448
10. The want of a clear doctrine of the contradictory has been the cause of much error in philosophy, ... 449
11. Distinction between the singly and the doubly contradictory, . . 450

Page

PROPOSITION II.

A Premiss by which the Third Alternative is eliminated, . . . 451
Demonstration, ... ib.
Observations and Explanations, ... 452
1. Why this proposition is introduced, ... ib.
2. *Second Counter-proposition*, ... ib.
3. To what extent it is true, ... ib.

PROPOSITION III.

A Premiss by which the Third Alternative is eliminated, . . 454
Demonstration, ... ib.
Observations and Explanations, ... ib.
1. The truth of this proposition is presupposed by the very nature of the inquiry, ... 455
2. *Third Counter-proposition*. Why there is none, ... 456

PROPOSITION IV.

Eliminates the Third Alternative, ... 457
Demonstration, ... ib.
Observations and Explanations, ... ib.
1. What this proposition effects, ... ib.
2. *Fourth Counter-proposition*. Why there is none, . . . 458
3. The previous propositions are preliminary. Proposition V. is the starting-point, ... ib.

PROPOSITION V.

The Remaining Alternatives, ... 459
Demonstration, ... ib.
Observations and Explanations, ... ib.
1. This proposition secures the key of the ontology, . . . 460
2. *Fifth Counter-proposition*. Why there is none, ... 461

PROPOSITION VI.

What Absolute Existence is not, ... 462
Demonstration, ... ib.
Observations and Explanations, ... 463
1. *Sixth Counter-proposition*, ... ib.
2. Is approved of by ordinary thinking, and by psychology, . . ib.
3. In what sense material things exist, ... ib.

PROPOSITION VII.

What Absolute Existence is not, ... 465
Demonstration, ... ib.
Observations and Explanations, ... 466
1. *Seventh Counter-proposition*, ... ib.

Page

PROPOSITION VIII.

WHAT ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE IS NOT, ... 467
DEMONSTRATION, ... ib.
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... 468
1. *Eighth Counter-proposition*, ... ib.
2. Importance of the ego as a constituent of Absolute Existence, . . ib.
3. Why the reduction of the ego *per se* to a contradiction is important, . ib.

PROPOSITION IX.

THE ORIGIN OF KNOWLEDGE, ... 469
DEMONSTRATION, ... ib.
OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS, ... ib.
1. Question as to the origin of knowledge—has been erroneously treated, . 470
2. The assumption which vitiates the discussion, ... ib.
3. First consequence of the assumption. *Ninth Counter-proposition*, . 471
4. Second consequence. The doctrine of representationism, . . . ib.
5. The earliest form of representationism. Physical Influx, . . . 472
6. Correction of this doctrine by Des Cartes, ... 473
7. Consequences of the Cartesian correction, ... 474
8. Scepticism and idealism arise, ... ib.
9. The Cartesian salvo—hypothesis of "Occasional Causes." Its insufficiency, ... 475
10. Malebranche: His "Vision of all things in God," 477
11. Leibnitz: His "Pre-established Harmony," . . . . . ib.
12. Character of these hypotheses, ... 478
13. Locke's explanation, ... 479
14. Berkeley: His doctrine of intuitive perception, ... ib.
15. His fundamental defect, ... 480
16. Reid: His misunderstanding of Berkeley, ... 482
17. Reid failed to establish a doctrine of intuitive perception, . . ib.
18. His character as a philosopher, ... 484
19. He mistook the vocation of philosophy, ... 485
20. Kant. "Innate ideas," 486
21. Right interpretation of this doctrine, ... 487
22. The circumstance to be particularly attended to in considering this doctrine, ... 488
23. The misconception to be particularly guarded against, . . . 489
24. This misconception has never been guarded against by any philosopher, ib.
25. Hence the ineptitude of the controversy, ... 490
26. In this controversy Kant is as much at fault as his predecessors, . 491
27. How this system of Institutes avoids these errors, ... 493
28. *First*: it starts from no hypothesis, ... ib.
29. *Secondly*: it finds that all cognition consists of two elements, . . 494
30. *Thirdly*: it finds that each element is no cognition, but only a *half* or part-cognition, ... ib.
31. *Fourthly*: it finds that matter is only a *half* cognition, . . . 495
32. *Fifthly*: it establishes "intuitive," and overthrows "representative" perception, ... ib.
33. *Sixthly*: it steers clear of materialism, ... 496

Page

34. *Seventhly:* it steers clear of spurious idealism, ... 496
35. *Eighthly:* it is under no obligation to explain the origin of knowledge, because knowledge itself is *the Beginning*, ... 498
36. The synthesis of ego and non-ego is original, and not factitious or secondary, ... 499

PROPOSITION X.

What Absolute Existence is, ... 500
Demonstration, ... *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, ... 501
1. This proposition solves the problem of ontology, ... *ib.*
2. It answers the question: What is Truth? 502
3. All Existence is the synthesis of the universal and the particular, . 503
4. Thus the equation of the Known and the Existent has been proved, . 504
5. The coincidence of the Absolute in Existence with the Absolute in Cognition has also been proved, ... 505
6. Attention called to restriction in foregoing paragraph, ... *ib.*
7. Illustration of restriction—What the ontology gives out as alone Absolute Existence, ... 506
8. This paragraph qualifies an assertion made in p. 270, ... 507
9. In what sense we know, and in what sense we are ignorant of, Absolute Existence, ... 508
10. *Tenth Counter-proposition*, ... 509

PROPOSITION XI.

What Absolute Existence is Necessary, ... 510
Demonstration, ... *ib.*
Observations and Explanations, ... 511
1. Distinction taken in this proposition. Ontological proof of Deity, . *ib.*
2. The system is *forced* to this conclusion, ... 512
3. *Eleventh Counter-proposition*, ... 513

Summary and Conclusion, ... 514
1. The main question is—how has the system redeemed its pledges? . *ib.*
2. It is submitted that the system is both reasoned and true, . . 515
3. The chief consideration to be looked to in estimating the system, . *ib.*
4. Its negative character is to be attended to principally, . . . *ib.*
5. The first step which the system takes in its negative or polemical character, 516
6. The next step which the system takes in its negative or polemical character, *ib.*
7. The capital contradiction which the epistemology brings to light and corrects, ... *ib.*
8. The second contradiction which it corrects, ... 518
9. The third contradiction which it corrects, ... *ib.*
10. The fourth and fifth contradictions which it corrects, . . . 519
11. The propositions and counter-propositions fall into group . . *ib.*
12. The sixth contradiction which the epistemology corrects, . . 520
13. The seventh contradiction which it corrects, ... 521
14. The eighth contradiction which it corrects, ... *ib.*
15. The ninth contradiction which it corrects, ... *ib.*

Page

16. The tenth contradiction which it corrects, ... 522
17. The eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth contradictions which it corrects, *ib.*
18. The remaining contradictions which it corrects, ... 523
19. The leading contradiction which the agnoiology corrects, ... 524
20. The derivative contradictions which it corrects, ... *ib.*
21. The concluding contradiction which it corrects, ... 525
22. The opinions entertained by natural thinking, and to some extent by psychology, on the subject of "Being," . . . . . *ib.*
23. How the ontology goes to work in exposing the contradictions involved in these opinions, ... 526
24. Exposure and refutation of these contradictions, ... *ib.*
25. The ninth contradiction which the ontology corrects, ... 527
26. The tenth contradiction which the ontology corrects, ... *ib.*
27. The eleventh contradiction which the ontology corrects, ... 528
28. By the correction of these contradictions, the system has redeemed its pledge, ... *ib.*
29. The utility of philosophical study, ... 529
30. As a discipline of necessary and demonstrated truth, ... 530

ERRATA.

Page 259, line 3, *delete* "own."

„ 327, „ 17, *for* "undetached" *read* "unattached."

INSTITUTES OF METAPHYSIC.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. THROUGHOUT the following work the word "Philosophy," when used by itself, is to be taken as synonymous with *speculative science*, or "metaphysics," as they are usually termed. What philosophy or metaphysic *is*, will unfold itself, it is to be hoped, in the sequel. At the outset, it is merely necessary to state that, as employed in these pages, the term does not include either natural philosophy or mathematical science, but excludes them expressly from its signification.

The word "philosophy" as here employed.

§ 2. A system of philosophy is bound by two main requisitions,—it ought to be true, and it ought to be reasoned. If a system of philosophy is not true, it will scarcely be convincing; and if it is not reasoned, a man will be as little satisfied with it as a

The two main requisitions of philosophy.

hungry person would be by having his meat served up to him raw. Philosophy, therefore, in its ideal perfection, is a body of reasoned truth.

Which of them is the more stringent.

§ 3. Of these obligations, the latter is the more stringent: it is more proper that philosophy should be reasoned, than that it should be true; because, while truth may perhaps be unattainable by man, to reason is certainly his province, and within his power. In a case where two objects have to be overtaken, it is more incumbent on us to compass the one to which our faculties are certainly competent, than the other, to which they are perhaps inadequate.

The value of systems determined by a reference to these requisitions.

§ 4. This consideration determines the value of a system of philosophy. A system is of the highest value only when it embraces both these requisitions —that is, when it is both true and reasoned. But a system which is reasoned without being true, is always of higher value than a system which is true without being reasoned.

An unreasoned system of no value, because at variance with definition of philosophy.

§ 5. The latter kind of system is of no value; because philosophy is "the attainment of truth *by the way of reason*." That is its definition. A system, therefore, which reaches the truth, but *not* by the way of reason, is not philosophy at all; and has, therefore, no scientific worth. The best that could

be said of it would be, that it was better than a system which was neither true nor reasoned.

§ 6. Again,—an unreasoned philosophy, even though true, carries no guarantee of its truth. It may be true, but it cannot be certain; because all certainty depends on rigorous evidence—on strict demonstrative proof. Therefore no certainty can attach to the conclusions of an unreasoned philosophy

Because, though true, it cannot be certain.

§ 7. Further,—the truths of science, in so far as science is a means of intellectual culture, are of no importance in themselves, or considered apart from each other. It is only the study and apprehension of their vital and organic connection which is valuable in an educational point of view. But an unreasoned body of philosophy, however true and formal it may be, has no living and essential interdependency of parts on parts; and is, therefore, useless as a discipline of the mind, and valueless for purposes of tuition.

Because of no use as a mental discipline.

§ 8. On the other hand, a system which is reasoned, but not true, has always some value. It creates reason by exercising it. It is employing the proper means to reach truth, although it may fail to reach it. Even though its parts may not be true, yet if each of them be a step leading to the final catastrophe—a link in an unbroken chain on

A reasoned system, though not true, has some value as an exercise of reason.

which the ultimate disclosure hinges—and if each of the parts be introduced merely because it is such a step or link,—in that case it is conceived that the system is not without its use, as affording an invigorating employment to the reasoning powers, and that general satisfaction to the mind which the successful extrication of a plot, whether in science or in romance, never fails to communicate.

It complies more closely with definition of philosophy than the other.

§ 9. Such a system, although it falls short of the definition of philosophy just given, comes nearer to it than the other; because to reach truth, but not by the way of reason, is to violate the definition in its very essence; whereas to miss truth, but by the way of reason, is to comply with the fundamental circumstance which it prescribes. If there are other ways of reaching truth than the road of reason, a system which enters on any of these other paths, whatever else it may be, it is not a system of philosophy in the proper sense of the word.

But a system should be both true and reasoned.

§ 10. But, as has been said, a system of philosophy ought to be both true in all its positions, and also thoroughly reasoned out in a series of strict demonstrations, which, while each is complete and impregnable in itself, shall present, in their combination, only one large demonstration from the beginning to the end of the work.

§ 11. Without offering any opinion as to how far the systems of philosophers may be true, we may affirm with certainty of the whole of them, that they are not reasoned—meaning by "reasoned," an unbroken chain of clear demonstration carried through from their first word to their last. To whatever extent preceding inquirers may have fulfilled one of the requirements of philosophy, they have neglected the more essential and obligatory of the two. And the consequence makes itself heard in a murmur, over the whole world, of deep dissatisfaction, to which the words of the following paragraph may give a faithful, though perhaps feeble, expression.

Systems of philosophy are unreasoned.

§ 12. It is a matter of general complaint that, although we have plenty of disputations and dissertations on philosophy, we have no philosophy itself. This is perfectly true. People write about it, and about it; but no one has grasped with an unflinching hand the very thing itself. The whole philosophical literature of the world is more like an unwieldy commentary on some text which has perished, or rather has never existed, than like what a philosophy itself should be. Our philosophical treatises are no more philosophy than Eustathius is Homer, or than Malone is Shakespeare. They are mere partial and desultory annotations on some text, on which, unfortunately, no man can lay his hands, because it nowhere exists. Hence the embroilment of speculation;

The present state of philosophy described.

hence the dissatisfaction, even the despair, of every inquiring mind which turns its attention to metaphysics. There is not now in existence even the shadow of a tribunal to which any point in litigation can be referred. There is not now in existence a single book which lays down with precision and impartiality the Institutes of all metaphysical opinion, and shows the seeds of all speculative controversies. Hence philosophy is not only a war, but it is a war in which none of the combatants understands the grounds either of his own opinion or of that of his adversary; or sees the roots of the side of the question which he is either attacking or defending. The springs by which these disputatious puppets are worked, lie deep out of their own sight. Every doctrine which is either embraced or rejected, is embraced or rejected blindly, and without any insight into its merits; and every blow which is struck, whether for truth or error, is struck ignorantly, and at hap-hazard.

First. How is this state to be *explained? Secondly.* How remedied?

§ 13. This description is no exaggeration; it falls short of the truth. It will readily be believed, not perhaps by philosophers themselves, but by all who, without being philosophers, have endeavoured to obtain some acquaintance with the views of those coy custodiers of the truth. But the fact being certain that the condition of philosophy is such as has been described, or worse, the question is, *first*,

How is this state of matters to be accounted for? and, *secondly*, How is it to be remedied?

§ 14. *First*, It is to be accounted for generally by that neglect of the chief requisition of philosophy which has been already pointed out—by the circumstance, namely, that philosophy is not reasoned. What is meant by "reasoned" can scarcely be well explained except by the thing itself being done. The body of this work, therefore, is referred to for a practical and detailed explanation of the term. Any general observations would probably teach the reader nothing but what he already knows, and would only retard, without enlightening his progress. Strict reasoning, like everything else, is best explained, not by being explained, but by being *done*. The unsatisfactory state, then, of philosophy is to be accounted for generally by the circumstance that philosophy is not reasoned.

First, it is explained (§§ 14-31) by philosophy not being reasoned.

§ 15. So long as philosophy is not strictly reasoned out from the very beginning, no cessation of controversy can be expected; and not only can no armistice be expected—nothing but misunderstandings can prevail. All the captains are sailing on different tacks, under different orders, and under different winds; and each is railing at the others, because they will not keep the same course with himself. More than that,—there is not a single con-

No good can be expected so long as philosophy is not reasoned.

troversy in philosophy in which the antagonists are playing at the same game. The one man is playing at chess, his adversary is playing against him at billiards; and whenever a victory is achieved, or a defeat sustained, it is always such a victory as a billiard-player might be supposed to gain over a chess-player, or such a defeat as a billiard-player might be supposed to sustain at the hands of a chess-player. These incongruous contests are entirely attributable to the circumstance that philosophy has not been reasoned out from the bottom, and that the disputants have no common question before them on which they have joined issue.

The masks of philosophy.

§ 16. As time has advanced, it has constantly sped worse with philosophy, instead of speeding better. This could not be otherwise: to carry forward a pure science, the first principles of which are not thoroughly ascertained, and to carry it forward by other means than that of strict demonstration, is only to add layer after layer to the winding-clothes which already cover up the truth; it is only to add another coating to the infinite litterings of the Augean stable, whose pavement no son of Adam can get down to. Every question in philosophy is the mask of another question; and all these masking and masked questions require to be removed and laid aside, until the ultimate but *truly first* question has been reached. Then, but not till then, is it

possible to decipher and resolve the outside mask, and all those below it, which come before us in the first instance. Instead, however, of removing these successive masks, each succeeding inquirer undertakes to unriddle the outermost one off-hand; and the consequence is, that, so far from resolving it, he puts over it a new coating of paint, and thus leaves the original masks covered over with an additional stratum of concealing visors, by which the first difficulty of attaining to the truth is very considerably augmented. So that now no question comes before the world which does not present many disguises, both natural and artificial, worn one above another; and these false-faces are continually increasing. *Does matter exist or not?* People actually think that *that* is, or ever was, a question in philosophy. It is only the outer-case masking a multiplicity of masks, which would all require to be removed before even a glimpse of the true question can be obtained. Another phantom is a mask, or rather a whole toyshop of masks, which philosophers have been pleased to *call* the "Absolute;" but what they exactly mean by this name—what it is that is under these trappings,—neither those who run down the *incognito*, nor those who speak it fair, have ever condescended to inform us. Indeed, it may be affirmed with certainty that no man, for at least two thousand years, has seen the true flesh-and-blood countenance of a single philosophical problem.

Its unsatisfactory state further accounted for. The globe of speculation.

§ 17. But how is *that* to be accounted for? It is to be accounted for by the circumstance, that men have supposed that in philosophy they could advance by going forwards; whereas the truth is, that they can advance only by going, in a manner, backwards. We have tried to get *to the end*, without having first got *to the beginning*. The true state of the case is this: The world of speculation, like the physical globe, is rounded to a sphere, but a sphere of more gigantic compass and more difficult circumnavigation than any which the whole natural universe can show. The primitive articles of all thought, the seminal principles of all reason, the necessary constituents of all knowledge, the keys of all truth, lie, at first, buried under our very feet; but, as yet, we are not privileged to find them. We must first circumnavigate the globe; the whole world of speculation must be traversed by our weary feet. Hence every step forward carries us only farther and farther from the mark. Ere long the elements of truth—all that we are indistinctly looking for—lie in the far-distant rear, while we vainly think that we behold them glimmering on the horizon in our front. We have left them behind us, though we know it not—like decaying camp-fires, like deserted household gods. We still keep moving onwards in a direction which is, at once, wrong and right—wrong, because every step leads us farther and farther from the truth; right, because it is our

doom. Every new halt increases our confusion, our consternation, and our dismay. Our hearts may sink within us when we cross the line on the shoreless sea of speculation. At the antipodes the clouds of doubt may settle dark upon our path, and the tempests of despair may cause our fortitude to quail; but, *vestigia nulla retrorsum*, there is no drawing back for us now. We are embarked on an irrevocable mission; let us press forward then—let us carry through. The intellectual, like the physical world, is *a round;* and at the moment when the wanderer imagines himself farthest from the house of Humanity, he will find himself at home. He has revolved to the spot of his nativity. He is again surrounded by the old familiar things. But familiarity has been converted into insight; the toils of speculation have made him strong; and the results of speculation have made him wise. He is now privileged to dig up the keys of truth, and to see, and to show to others, the very seeds of reason. He now beholds the great universe of God in the light of a second illumination, which is far purer and far less troubled than the first. Philosophy and common sense are reconciled.

§ 18. The unreasoned and generally unsatisfactory state of philosophy is to be explained by the circumstance, that no inquirer has ever yet got to the beginning; and this, again, is to be accounted for

Explanation continued. *First* principles always come out *last*.

by a fact for which no man is answerable, but which is inherent in the very constitution of things—the circumstance, namely, that things which are *first* in the order of nature are *last* in the order of knowledge. This consideration, while it frees all human beings from any degree of blame, serves to explain why the rudiments of philosophy should still be to seek, and why speculation should have exhibited so many elaborate, although unreasoned and ungrounded, productions, while its very alphabet was in arrear. This view may be the better of some illustration.

Illustrations of this from language and grammar.

§ 19. First principles of every kind have their influence, and indeed operate largely and powerfully, long before they come to the surface of human thought and are articulately expounded. This is more particularly exemplified in the case of language. The principles of grammar lie at the root of all languages, and preside over their formation. But these principles do their work in the dark. No man's intellect traces their secret operation, while the language is being moulded by their control. Yet the mind of every man, who uses the language with propriety and effect, is imbued with these principles, although he has no knowledge of their existence. Their practice and their influence are felt long before their presence and their existence are perceived.

The operative agencies of language are hidden; its growth is imperceptible.

"Crescit occulto, velut arbor, ævo."

Like a tree, unobserved through the solitudes of a thousand years, up grows the mighty stem, and the mighty branches of a magnificent speech. No man saw the seed planted—no eye noticed the infant sprouts—no mortal hand watered the nursling of the grove—no register was kept of the gradual widening of its girth, or of the growing circumference of its shade—till, the deciduous dialects of surrounding barbarians dying out, the unexpected bole stands forth in all its magnitude, carrying aloft in its foliage the poetry, the history, and the philosophy of a heroic people, and dropping for ever over the whole civilised world the fruits of Grecian literature and art.

§ 20. It is always very late in the day before the seminal principles of speech are detected and explained. Indeed, the language which owed to them both birth and growth may have ceased to be a living tongue before these, the regulating elements of its formation, come to light, and are embodied in written grammars. That most elementary species of instruction which we familiarly term the A, B, C, had no express or articulate existence in the minds, or on the lips, of men, until thousands of years after

Illustration continued.

the invention and employment of language; yet these, the vital constituents of all speech, were *there* from the beginning.

Illustration from logic.

§ 21. Logic is another instance. Men reasoned, generation after generation, long before they knew a single dialectical rule, or had any notion of the construction of the syllogism. The principles of logic were operative in every ratiocination, yet the reasoner was incognisant of their influence until Aristotle anatomised the process, and gave out the law of thought in its more obvious and ordinary workings. Whether Aristotle's rudiments of logic have not an antecedent rudiments—which time may yet bring to light—is a somewhat unsettled problem in speculation.

Illustration from law.

§ 22. The same analogy may be observed, to a large extent, in the formation of our civil laws. The laws which hold society together, operate with the force of instincts, and after the manner of vague traditions, long before they are digested into written tables. The written code does not create the law; it merely gives a distinct promulgation, and a higher degree of authority, to certain floating principles which had operated on people's practice antecedently. Laws, in short, exist, and bind society, long before they exist as established, or even as known laws. They have an occult and

implied influence, before they obtain a manifest and systematic form. They come early in the order of nature, but late in the order of knowledge; early in the order of action, but late in the order of thinking; early in the order of practice, but late in the order of theory.

§ 23. So in regard to philosophy. Its principles, like all other principles—like the elements of every science and of every art—though first in the order of nature, are last in the order of intelligence; only there is this difference between philosophy and all other creations, that its principles, being the earliest birth of time, are therefore among the very last that shall be completely extricated from the masses in which they lie imbedded. They force man's general powers forward into the light; for themselves, they shrink back, and keep aloof from observation. The invariable rule seems to be, that what is earliest in the progress of existence is latest in the progress of discovery—a consideration which might lead us to suppose that all science can advance only by going, in a manner, backwards, or rather by *coming round;* that the infinite future can alone comprehend or interpret the secrets of the infinite past; and that the apotheosis and final triumph of human reason will be, when, after having traversed the whole cycle of thought, she returns—enriched only with a deeper insight and a clearer conscious-

Application to philosophy. Here, too, *first* principles come out *last.*

ness—to be merged in the glorious innocence of her primitive and inspired *incunabula*.

These principles, though operative in philosophy, are unnoticed and unknown.

§ 24. These considerations may serve to explain, to some extent at least, how it happens that the venerable science of metaphysics should, even thus late in the day, be without any articulate exposition of its most elementary principles. The very circumstance that these principles are elementary, both necessitates and explains the lateness of their appearance. But although no such institutional work exists, we are not to suppose that these principles have been powerless, inert, or non-existent; on the contrary, they have been living seeds which have germinated in luxuriant produce in the minds of all great thinkers, from Pythagoras downwards. But it is certain that these elements, though never dormant, have worked for the most part in secresy and in silence. They nestle away out of sight with wonderful pertinacity; hence nobody knows what they are, and nobody can be told what they are, except by their being shown to him, not in a book about philosophy, but in a reasoned work which is itself philosophy. All preliminary explanations of philosophy and its principles must be more or less insufficient. Farther on, however, in this introduction, the more important initial points of philosophy shall be discussed and adjusted. Meanwhile it may be said, in a very few words, that by the principles,

the elements, the rudiments of our science, are meant in particular, its one and sole starting-point, its end or object, its *business* in this world, *what* it has to do, *why* it has to do it, and *how* it does it. These matters, though early in the order of nature, have been late in the order of science. They are the preliminary steps of metaphysic, yet the world has been very slow in finding them out. They are the antediluvian germs, the pre-formations of philosophy, yet they have never been distinctly brought to light. There cannot be a doubt that the mind of Plato was imbued with a profound sense of the object or business of speculative science, that he had a dim intuition of the necessary principles of all reason, and of all existence. But these objects wavered before his view; they refused to form themselves into shape. They rather overshadowed him from behind, with the awe of a brooding and mysterious presence, than rose up in front of him, like a beautiful countenance, whose lineaments were decipherable and clear.

Hence philosophy is nowhere a scheme reasoned throughout.

§ 25. Hence philosophy is nowhere a body of intellectual light, a scheme of demonstrated truth, from the beginning to the end. It could not be such, unless philosophy had possessed a distinct perception of what she had to do, and a steady comprehension of the means of doing it. But philosophy could not possess this insight so long as she lived

passive and unconscious under the presidency of her own principles, instead of getting the upper hand of them, and thus obtaining an intelligent survey of their whole scope and operation. It was not enough that the elementary truths, the instigating motives of speculative inquiry, should have secretly influenced the formation of philosophy. It was necessary that the secret influence of these truths and motives should be no longer secret but manifest, before philosophy could go forth fully instructed in the causes of her own being—fully cognisant of the purpose for which she had come into the world, and completely armed with the weapons of universal intellectual conquest. But this consummation was not possible, until a comparatively late period in the career of speculation; for that which is first in time is last in science. Hence philosophy has continued to be a body of opinions not reasoned out from the beginning—of opinions which, even when they seem most obvious and most true, are not entitled to the name of intelligible; because, in strict science, nothing, properly speaking, is intelligible, unless it rests on grounds of rigorous demonstration or necessary reason.

§ 26. It is further to be observed, in explanation of the deficiencies of philosophy, as shown in its unreasoned character, that from an early period there has been a powerful tendency at work, counteract-

ing the proper efforts of speculative thought. This tendency displays itself in the determination, strongly manifested in certain quarters of late years, but certainly far from being triumphant, to limit *the strictly necessary truths of reason* to the smallest possible amount—to confine them to the pure mathematics, if not to explode them even here. This is an interesting question; but, like all others, it can be effectually settled, not by general observations, but only by the production of the subjects in dispute—that is, the necessary truths themselves. These will appear in their proper places. Meanwhile all enlarged argument in their defence, and all detailed explanation of their character, must be avoided, as our purpose at present merely is, to point out the retarding causes of speculation, of which the discountenance thrown on the necessary truths of reason has been undoubtedly one, and one of the most influential.

The repudiation of necessary truths, a further retarding cause.

§ 27. A few observations, however, may here be offered, in elucidation of what is meant by necessary truth. A necessary truth or law of reason is a truth or law the opposite of which is inconceivable, contradictory, nonsensical, impossible; more shortly, it is a truth, in the fixing of which nature had only *one* alternative, be it positive or negative. Nature might have fixed that the sun should go round the earth, instead of the earth round the sun;

What necessary truth is.

at least we see nothing in that supposition which is contradictory and absurd. Either alternative was equally possible. But nature could not have fixed that two straight lines should, in any circumstances, enclose a space; for this involves a contradiction.

Its criterion is "the law of contradiction." Law explained.

§ 28. The logical "law of identity or contradiction," as it is called, is the general expression and criterion of all necessary truth. This law may be best exhibited by carrying it a point higher than is usually done. The law is, that a thing must be what it is. *A is A.* Suppose that the denier of all necessary truth, and consequently of this proposition, were to say—"No; a thing need not be what it is;" the rejoinder is—"Then your proposition, that a thing need not be what it is, need not be what *it* is. It may be a statement to directly the opposite effect. Which of the statements, then, is it? Is it a proposition which affirms that a thing need not be what it is, or a proposition declaratory of the very contrary?" "It is a proposition to the former effect," says he. "But how can I know that? If a thing need not be what it is, why need your proposition (which, of course, is something) be what it is? Why may it not be a declaration that a thing is and must be what it is? Give me some guarantee that it is not the latter proposition, or I cannot possibly take it up. I cannot know what it means, for it may have two meanings." The man

is speechless. He cannot give me any guarantee. He must take for granted that his proposition, when he proposes it, is and must be *what it is*. This is all we want. The law of contradiction thus vindicates itself. It cannot be denied without being assented to, for the person who denies it must assume that he is denying it; in other words, he must assume that he is saying what he is saying, and he must admit that the contrary supposition—to wit, that he is saying what he is *not* saying—involves a contradiction. Thus the law is established. It proves the existence of, at any rate, one necessary truth or law of reason; and if there can be one, why can there not be many? Indeed, the law of contradiction is not so much one special necessary truth, as the generalisation or general form, and exponent of all ideas (and their name is legion) whose opposites involve a mental contradiction. The reader need scarcely be informed that the law of contradiction has no worth or merit of its own. Looked at in itself, it is trivial beyond triviality. It is merely convenient, as an abbreviated expression for the criterion of all necessary truth, the test being—do their opposites involve a mental contradiction? Are these opposites at variance with the law which declares that A is A? If they are—if their opposites involve this contradiction—then the truths in question are necessary; if they do not involve it, they are contingent.

Its criterion is *not* ready acceptance.

§ 29. A short but important observation may here be made, that ready acceptance, instantaneous acquiescence, is *not* the criterion of necessary truth, although it is very generally regarded as such. Our whole natural thinking, as shall be distinctly proved in the body of this work, consists of a series of judgments, each of which involves a mental contradiction, —in other words, controverts a necessary truth or law of reason. But certainly it is not to be expected either that these judgments should be seen to present contradictions the moment they are uttered, or that the ideas of reason by which they are supplanted should be instantaneously acquiesced in as necessary. All *important* necessary truths require a much longer time, and a much more sedulous contemplation, to obtain the assent of human intelligence than do the contingent ones.

Return. Philosophy deals with necessary truths—therefore retarded by their proscription.

§ 30. From this explanation we return to the subject more immediately in hand, the retarding causes of philosophy. The unfounded assumption that the class of necessary truths, or laws of reason, is either null or of very limited extent,—and the effrontery with which their investigation has been proscribed as an illegitimate pursuit,—have contributed more directly than any other cause to arrest the improvement of speculation, and to render it a vague and unreasoned science: for philosophy executes her proper functions only when dealing with necessary

truth. This cause, however, is merely an exemplification of the more comprehensive cause already pointed out; for the necessary truths of reason,—being the most primitive elements of philosophy, and the first in the order of things,—are fixed by that very circumstance, as the most obstinate in concealing themselves from view, and as among the latest that shall be brought to light. They have had to contend, however, with an additional impediment which it was proper to notice,—a determined resolution to keep them down. But ultimately they will blaze out as lucent as the stars; and, like the stars, it will perhaps be found that they are numberless.

How ill the necessary truths have fared in Germany and in our own country.

§ 31. This brief explanation of the backward and ill-conditioned and unmanageable state of philosophy generally, may be concluded by the remark that, both in Germany and in our own country, the necessary truths of reason, even when, in a certain sense, and to a certain extent, admitted, have fared as badly as they possibly could. The criterion of contradiction has been made to apply only to some of them, while another class which could not bear this test were also set down as necessary truths. As if they ought not to have been placed under the contingent category! The criterion of contradiction must be brought rigorously to bear on *every* necessary truth, otherwise it is unworthy of the name. This misap-

plication, or lax employment of the criterion, was Kant's doing; and frightful confusion has been the result. In our own country Kant's example has been followed, and to some extent preceded. The necessary truths of reason, when touched upon by our philosophers, have been so uncritically sifted; they have been so mixed up and confounded with the truths of mere contingency,—the two classes being, to a large extent, absolutely placed on a par in point of authority, whereby the distinction between them is rendered void and of no effect,—that the prospects of our philosophy, and the interests of speculative thought, would have been fully more promising had the necessary truths not been meddled with at all.

Secondly, How is the unsatisfactory state of philosophy to be *remedied?* Short answer.

§ 32. *Secondly*, How is the present unsatisfactory condition of philosophy *to be remedied.* The short answer is, that it can be remedied only by a diligent attempt to digest a body of philosophical institutes which shall be both true and reasoned, in the strictest and most thorough-going sense of the word *reasoned.* No indulgence on the score of well-meant intentions; no excuse on the ground of the incompetency of human reason (for this incompetency is always mere laziness aping the virtue of humility); no allowance on the plea of the difficulty of the undertaking, should be either asked or given. The thing must either be done thoroughly or not at all. Such a work must

be no mere *contribution* to philosophical literature. It must be no mere bringing together of materials for some other hand to arrange. How fond most of the contributors to science are of taking this view of their own labours! Modest people! As if any one would thank a mason who should say to him—"There, sir, are the stones; you can now build your house for yourself!" It must embrace every essential part of philosophy, thoroughly digested, and strictly reasoned out as a harmonious and consistent whole. It must show the exact point where every opinion and every controversy in philosophy *takes off* from the tap-root or main trunk of the great tree of speculation. The disputants themselves *never* know where this point is. And thus, in its explanatory matter, it ought to be a complete History, as well as a complete Body, of speculative science. At the very least, this much must be affirmed, that the defective condition of philosophy can be remedied, and a better state of matters brought about, only by a work which shall comply rigorously with both the requisitions laid down in § 2.

§ 33. Truth will generally take care of itself, if a man looks vigilantly and conscientiously after the interests of the scientific reason. Although the mere semblance of truth—that is, the plausibilities of ordinary thinking, are altogether repugnant to reason, there is a natural affinity between true truth and

A remedial system uniting truth and reason, not impossible.

reason which can never fail to bring them into contact when the inquirer knows exactly what he is aiming at, and is determined to reach it. Real truth, therefore, is attainable, on account of its affinity to right reason; and if a man has reason, he surely can use it rightly. Therefore no plea is available against philosophy on the ground that it is an absolute impracticability, or that it is impossible to bring reason into harmony and coincidence with truth.

Single canon for the right use of reason.

§ 34. But the *right* use of reason? That is the point. It is here where the difficulty lies, as most people will think. Many weary rules, for which no man was ever one whit the wiser, have been written on this threadbare theme. The following single canon is quite sufficient for all the purposes of a reasoned philosophy. *The canon of all philosophy:* "*Affirm* nothing except what is enforced by reason as a necessary truth—that is, as a truth the supposed reversal of which would involve a contradiction; and *deny* nothing, unless its affirmation involves a contradiction — that is, contradicts some necessary truth or law of reason." Let this rule be strictly adhered to, and all will go on well in philosophy. Its importance, of course, consists, not in its being stated, but in its being practised.

§ 35. With regard to the particular scheme, or In-

stitute of metaphysics, now submitted to the public, and in which these general views are endeavoured to be carried into effect, this, at the outset, may be premised, that, while it cannot disclaim its pretensions to be both true and reasoned, without arrogating to itself a modesty for which it would get no credit,—still it desires to rest its claims to consideration rather on the circumstance that it is a system of demonstration, than on the circumstance that it is a system of truth. If it is truer than other systems, it is so only because it is demonstratively truer; and if they are falser than it, this is only because they are demonstratively falser. If the element of demonstration were subtracted, there cannot be a doubt that many systems would appear to be much truer than this one.

This system of Institutes claims both truth and demonstration, but rather demonstration than truth.

§ 36. The general character of this system is, that it is a body of necessary truth. It starts from a single proposition which, it is conceived, is an essential axiom of all reason, and one which cannot be denied without running against a contradiction. The axiom may not be self-evident in an instant; but that, as has been remarked, is no criterion. A moderate degree of reflection, coupled with the observations by which the proposition is enforced, may satisfy any one that its nature is such as has been stated. From this single proposition the whole system is deduced in a series of demonstrations, each

It is a body of necessary truth. Its pretensions stated.

of which professes to be as strict as any demonstration in Euclid, while the whole of them taken together constitute one great demonstration. If this rigorous necessity is not their character to the very letter,—if there is a single weak point in the system,—if there be any one premiss or any one conclusion which is not as certain as that two and two make four, the whole scheme falls to pieces, and must be given up, root and branch. Everything is perilled on the pretension that the scheme is rigidly demonstrated throughout; for a philosophy is not entitled to exist, unless it can make good this claim.

An objection to its method stated and obviated.

§ 37. A trivial objection, which must here be noticed, may be taken to the system on the ground that it has borrowed from mathematics a method which is not applicable to philosophy. The applicability to philosophy of the method of strict demonstration, is a question which can be settled only by the result. If the application is found upon trial to be successful, nothing more need be said; if unsuccessful, no argument recommending its propriety can be of any avail, and no argument discountenancing its adoption can be of any use. The case is one which must decide itself; and the point is a point which calls for no argument in the abstract. As for the charge that philosophy has borrowed the method of mathematics, it would be much truer to say that mathematics, being a much simpler science, and

therefore susceptible of a much earlier maturity, have stolen, by anticipation, the proper method of philosophy. It is rather too much that one narrow section of human thought should be allowed to monopolise the whole, and only, method of universal truth.

§ 38. The student will find that the system here submitted to his attention is of a very polemical character—more so, he may imagine, than is consistent with the nature of a scheme which looks only to truth, and to its own exhibition of it, troubling itself with no other considerations. This point shall now obtain a full elucidation; for the discussion enables us to explain *exactly* the object or business of philosophy.

The polemical character of this system.

§ 39. This system is in the highest degree polemical; and why? Because philosophy exists only to correct the inadvertencies of man's ordinary thinking. She has no other mission to fulfil; no other object to overtake; no other business to do. If man naturally thinks aright, he need not be taught to think aright. If he is already, and without an effort, in possession of the truth, he does not require to be put in possession of it. The occupation of philosophy is gone: her office is superfluous: there is nothing for her to put hand to. Therefore philosophy assumes, and must assume, that man does not

Why philosophy must be polemical. She exists only to correct the inadvertencies of ordinary thinking.

naturally think aright, but must be taught to do so; that truth does not come to him spontaneously, but must be brought to him by his own exertions. But if man does not naturally think aright, he must think, we shall not say wrongly—(for that implies *malice prepense*)—but inadvertently; and if truth be not his inheritance by nature,—if he has to work for it, as he must for all his other bread,—then the native occupant of his mind, his birthright succession, must be, we shall not say falsehood—(for that, too, implies *malice prepense*)—but it must be error. The original dowry, then, of universal man is inadvertency and error. This assumption is the ground and only justification of the existence of philosophy.

This might be abundantly proved by the testimony of philosophers.

§ 40. If authority were of any avail in matters of pure speculation, abundant evidence, though not, indeed, of the clearest or most unfaltering character (for what is clear or unfaltering in philosophy?) might be adduced in confirmation of what is here advanced as the proper and sole object of philosophy. But it will be time enough to call these witnesses into court when our statement is denied, or when it has been shown that philosophy has, or can have, any other end in view than the rectification of the inadvertencies of man's spontaneous and ordinary thinking.

§ 41. This circumstance—namely, that philosophy

exists only to put right the oversights of common thinking—renders her polemical, not by choice, but by necessity. She would gladly avoid all fault-finding; but she cannot help herself. She is controversial as the very tenure and vindication of her existence; for how can she correct the slips of common opinion, the oversights of natural thinking, except by controverting them?

The object (or business to do) of philosophy renders her essentially polemical.

§ 42. To obviate the charge of disrespect which might otherwise be brought against the philosopher for holding very cheap the spontaneous judgments of mankind, it may be proper to mention that it is *his own* natural modes of thinking which he finds fault with, much more than it is *theirs*. He is dealing directly only with himself. He is directly correcting only his own customary oversights. It is only indirectly, and on the presumption that other people are implicated in the same transgressions,—faults, however, which he takes home more especially to himself, because he has no direct knowledge of them except within his own bosom,—that he challenges, and ventures to infer that is rectifying, their inadvertent thinking as well as his own. Let this be distinctly understood once for all. The philosopher labours just as much as other people do under all the infirmities incident to popular opinion. He is not one whit more exempt from the failings which he points out, and endeavours to put right, than any of his neighbours are.

The charge of disrespect which might be supposed to attach to philosophy on account of her polemical character, obviated.

His quarrel is not with them; it is with himself—a subject which he is not only entitled, but which he is bound to reform and coerce as rigorously as he can.

This system also adverse to psychology—and why.

§ 43. But further, it will be observed that this system is antagonistic, not only to natural thinking, but, moreover, to many a point of psychological doctrine. This, too, is inevitable. Psychology, or "the science of the human mind," instead of attempting to correct, does all in her power to ratify, the inadvertent deliverances of ordinary thought,—to prove them to be right. Hence psychology must, of necessity, come in for a share of the castigation which is doled out and directed upon common and natural opinion. It would be well if this could be avoided; but it cannot. Philosophy must either forego her existence, or carry on her operations corrective of ordinary thinking, and subversive of psychological science. It is, indeed, only by accident that philosophy is inimical to psychology: it is because psychology is the abettor and accomplice of common opinion *after the act;* but in reference to natural thinking, she is essentially controversial. Philosophy, however, is bound to deal much more rigorously and sternly with the doctrines of psychology than with the spontaneous judgments of unthinking man, because while these in themselves are mere oversights or inadvertencies, psychology con-

verts them into downright falsities by stamping them with the countersign or *imprimatur* of a specious, though spurious, science. In the occasional cases, moreover, in which psychology, instead of ratifying, endeavours to rectify the inadvertencies of popular thinking, it shall be shown, in the course of this work, that, so far from being successful, she only makes matters worse, by complicating the original error with a new contradiction, and sometimes with several new ones, of her own creation.

These remarks may be sufficient to explain, and also to justify, the polemical character of this work. It carries on a warfare by compulsion, not assuredly by choice. So soon as man *is born* with true and correct notions about himself and all other things, philosophy will take her departure from the world, for she will be no longer needed.

§ 44. To prevent, then, any mistake as to the *object*, or *purpose*, or *business* of philosophy, let it be again distinctly stated that the object of philosophy is the correction of the inadvertencies of ordinary thinking; and as these inadvertencies are generally confirmed, and never corrected, by psychology, and are thus converted from oversights into something worse, it is further the business of philosophy to refute psychology. This is *what* philosophy has *to do*.

What philosophy has *to do*, again distinctly stated.

§ 45. But this, though an essential, is only the

negative part of the business of philosophy. In rectifying the inadvertencies of popular thought, and in subverting their abetment by psychology, philosophy must, of course, substitute something in their place. Yes; and that something is TRUTH—so that the object, the business, the design, *the purpose* of philosophy, fully stated, is this, which may be laid down as the *Definition of metaphysic*: "Metaphysic is the substitution of true ideas—that is, of necessary truths of reason—in the place of the oversights of popular opinion and the errors of psychological science." That seems a plain enough statement, and it may serve as an answer to a question by which many people have professed themselves puzzled,—What are metaphysics? This definition is only a more special and explicit re-statement of the definition of philosophy given in § 5. It should be remarked that at every stage of its progress, and ever as its course becomes clearer, the definition of philosophy admits of being laid down in terms more and more definite. Its opening definition is always of necessity the *least* definite; and the definition now given is not the most definite that the subject admits of. Indeed, it cannot be understood, except in a general way, until the true ideas—the necessary truths of reason, here referred to—have been exhibited; but that can be done only in the Institutes themselves. The present definition, however, may serve to let people

Its positive object still more distinctly stated. Definition of metaphysics.

know precisely *what* philosophy or metaphysic proposes;—and it may also serve to clear people's heads of the confusing notion that metaphysic is, in some way or other, vaguely convertible with what is called "the science of the human mind," and has got for its object,—nobody knows what,—some hopeless inquiry about "faculties," and all that sort of rubbish. This must all come down, when philosophy, who has hitherto been going about like an operative out of employment, seeking work and finding none, is put in a fair way of obtaining a livelihood by having discovered her proper vocation, and got something definite to do.

Why philosophy undertakes this object.

§ 46. The reason *why* philosophy takes in hand the work specified in the definition above, scarcely requires to be insisted on, or even pointed out. No reason need be given why truth should be made to take the place of error in the mind of man, except the reason that the comer-in is truth, and the goer-out is error.

How philosophy goes to work. Adherence to canon—proposition and counter-proposition.

§ 47. *What* the object of philosophy is having been explained, and *why* this is her object having been stated, it now remains to be shown *how* philosophy, or, at least, how *this* philosophy, goes to work in compassing her end. Adhering rigorously to the canon laid down in § 34, philosophy convicts the natural opinions of man of being contradictory.

It would, indeed, be in the highest degree presumptuous in philosophy to challenge the ordinary opinions of mankind if they were not contradictory, because, in that case, they would probably, or at all events they might possibly, be correct, and philosophy, at the best, would be merely supplanting one set of probabilities by another set. Not only, therefore, must philosophy, in consistency with her own canon, convict natural thinking of being contradictory, but her procedure would be arrogant and irrational in the extreme, unless she were able to pronounce this sentence, doing so under the authority of the necessary Reason itself. Each deliverance, then, of ordinary thinking contradicts some necessary law or truth of all reason. This is shown, not by any round-about argument, but by directly confronting the natural opinions of man with the necessary truths or laws which they contradict. This consideration determines the following arrangement. The necessary truths or laws of all reason are laid down in a series of distinct propositions; and facing each of these propositions is laid down, in a counter-proposition, the contradictory inadvertency of ordinary opinion, so that we can always play them off against each other, and know exactly what we are dealing with, what we are contending *for*, and what we are contending *against*. It will always be found that the psychological doctrine on any particular point coincides, either wholly or partially (generally

wholly, or very nearly so), with the contradictory inadvertency of ordinary thought, and therefore the counter-propositions will be seen to represent faithfully the erroneous teachings of psychology, as well as the inadvertent decisions of common opinion. Proposition and counter-proposition are the two hinges of the system.

§ 48. The propositions and their demonstrations constitute the text or staple of the book. *These* are the "Institutes of Metaphysic." The first proposition only is laid down as axiomatic without any demonstration. Each proposition is followed by a series of *observations and explanations*, which are designed to clear up any obscurities and to remove any difficulties which may be felt to attach to the main propositions of the work, whether in thought or in expression, and to supply such critical and historical notices as may be deemed expedient. These comments are, of course, of a less rigorous character than the Institutes themselves. They are probably not so complete as they might be; but, in general, it will be found that they indicate with sufficient precision the points where the larger and often where the lesser controversies of philosophy take off from the tap-root or main stem. The counter-propositions could not always, or indeed often, be placed in close juxtaposition with the propositions, for various good reasons. They take their places among the observa-

Further explanations as to *how* philosophy goes to work.

tions and explanations, and by them they are cleared up, in so far as any elucidation is thought necessary. It will be observed that the counter-propositions, occupying at each point an antagonist position to the propositions, form a very consistent scheme of *apparent* truth. The objection to it is, that it contradicts a necessary truth or principle of reason at every point. But if any one thinks otherwise, he has here made out to his hand a perfectly coherent scheme of psychological doctrine and of common opinion. He can embrace it if he likes, and abjure the true metaphysic altogether. He will find that truth and error are carried out simultaneously on parallel lines. He can make his choice between them.

Advantages of this method.

§ 49. From this method of procedure, it is conceived that the following advantage will accrue. The reader will perceive, at each stage of his progress, which doctrine is right and which wrong. He will thoroughly understand each, through its contrast with the other. He will remark, not only what he is recommended to accept, but what he is recommended to give up. The incompatibility of the two opinions—the speculative and the common—will be obvious; and it will be seen that the conciliation of ordinary thinking, or "common sense," as it is sometimes rather abusively called, and philosophy, can be very well effected by the former giving in her submission to the decisions of the compulsory reason.

§ 50. A system which, on any subject, and more particularly on a subject like this, contents itself with merely laying down the true or correct doctrine on any point, does only half its work, and that half very imperfectly; because the wrong opinion, not being distinctly brought forward and expressly controverted, still retains possession of the student's mind, occupying it all the more inveterately, because it occupies it obscurely. Indeed, in such a case the two positions, not being contrasted, are not seen to be incompatible. They still coexist, but in such a way that neither can be said properly to exist, or to have a clear and vigorous standing in the mind. The wrong opinion being combated, but only in a vague and very inexplicit manner, loses the force and vigour of its previous authority; while the right opinion, being clouded by the obscure presence of the wrong one, and oppressed by its secret efforts to regain its former ascendancy, is enfeebled where it shines, and shorn of its brightest and most fructifying rays. This obscure and indefinite conflict between right and wrong opinion, between speculative and ordinary thinking, is the cause and origin of all scepticism, or philosophical indecision.

Disadvantages of not contrasting distinctly the true and the false.

§ 51. The neglect, moreover, to lay down in distinct terms this opposition between the right and the wrong, has been the occasion of the generally

General unintelligibility of systems is due to their neglect to exhibit this contrast.

unintelligible character of metaphysics, and serves to account for nearly all their obscurities. Even a slight acquaintance with the history of philosophy may satisfy any one that the neglect to place the truths to be learned in prominent and conspicuous contrast with the errors to be relinquished, has been the cause, for the most part, of the unintelligibility of all previous speculations. Why are the Platonic "ideas" generally unintelligible? Simply because Plato has not told us distinctly, and because no one knows exactly, what natural opinion this doctrine was advanced to controvert. Why is the *unica substantia* of Spinoza still without a meaning? For precisely the same reason. We do not exactly know what popular delusion it stands opposed to. Why are the "monads" of Leibnitz, and the "pre-established harmony" of the same philosopher, still without a key, or provided only with one which will not fit the wards of the lock? Just because he has not shown us distinctly what inadvertencies of common thought these doctrines were designed to take the place of. Why is Hegel impenetrable, almost throughout, as a mountain of adamant? Because he has nowhere set before us and explained the prevalent errors which, for aught we know to the contrary, he *may*, like a gigantic boa-constrictor, be crushing within his folds. He may be breaking every bone in their body in his stringent circumvolutions, but we do not know that; for he treats

us to no observations bearing directly, or even bearing remotely, on the natural opinions which his doctrines are, no doubt, in some obscure and unexplained fashion of their own, intended to subvert. This negligence, or omission, confirms the truth of what has been pointed out as the retarding cause of philosophy, namely, a loose grasp, an indistinct perception, of its leading principles, of its very alphabet —an imperfect apprehension of the work it had to do, of the object it proposed to overtake; for surely, if these speculators had *known* what that work or object was, they would have *said* what it was, and moreover they would have *done* it. But on this topic they are either silent, or speak with such uncertain utterance that they might as well have been dumb. Hence,—men of the highest genius though they were, and

"Serene creators of immortal things,"

they have left behind them legacies, the value of which is greatly impaired by their almost entire incomprehensibility, which, again, is attributable, almost entirely, to the circumstance that they took in hand only one-half of their proper work. They may have given us truths—they no doubt did so; but truths are unintelligible, or nearly so, unless when contrasted with their opposing errors, and these they kept studiously out of view. Hence, to speak in a general way of these, and of many other

philosophical writers, they are *not to be understood*, or if understood, it is not by any light which they themselves supply, but by a lamp which the reader must find and trim for himself, and bring with him to the research. The only light of every truth is its contrasting error; and, therefore, in the contemplation and exhibition of truth, a philosopher should take especial care not to keep himself too loftily aloof from the contemplation and exhibition of error, as these proud spirits, Plato, Spinoza, Leibnitz, and Hegel, most undoubtedly did, much to the detriment of their own profound disquisitions, and to the loss of mankind, who, had their method been different, might have profited more largely by their wisdom.

This system contrasts distinctly the true and the false.

§ 52. This system, therefore, attempts to pursue a different and less lofty course. In endeavouring to make truth understood, it relies chiefly on the illumination which truth may receive from being placed in strong and clear contrast with error. It sets off the true by the aid of the opposing false. This consideration has prompted the somewhat novel method of "proposition" and "counter-proposition"—a method which seems to be the only satisfactory mode of procedure in dealing with purely speculative matters, as carrying with it certain decided advantages in the way of general intelligibility, and of putting an end to all scepticism, vacillation, or indecision of opinion on philosophical topics; while the other

method, which merely plans the exhibition of truth, and not the counter-exhibition of error, fails in all these important particulars.

§ 53. This institute of metaphysic is divided into three main sections—an arrangement which will require some explanation, showing not only its general and convenient, but its essential and unarbitrary character. In philosophy, nothing is left to the discretion of an individual thinker. His whole arrangement, every step which he takes, must be necessitated, not chosen. It must be prescribed and enforced by the object itself, not by his way of viewing it. Accordingly, the arrangement now alluded to is one which chooses and fixes itself as the only possible arrangement in its leading features, whatever modifications its details may undergo at the hands of subsequent inquirers. But this matter will require a good deal of elucidation, which is supplied in the following § §, 54–62, in which the general sections of our subject, and their order, are laid out.

The three sections of this institute. Arrangement explained and proved to be essential, (§§ 54–62.)

§ 54. From what has been already said about the principles or first elements of philosophy being the last to show themselves, it is obvious that this is a science which naturally comes to us *end foremost*. The difficulty is, so to turn round the whole huge machinery as to get its *beginning* towards us. But

The section called *ontology* naturally comes *first*,—but is truly *last* in order.

what is the end which comes to us first, but which we must so turn round as to make it revolve away from us, and come to us last? It is this—announced in the form of a question—*What is truth?* This is *in itself* the last or ultimate; but *to us* it is always the first or proximate question of philosophy. The immediate answer which moves away this question, and so causes the whole structure to turn on its pivot, is this: Truth is—*what is*. Whatever *absolutely* is, is true. There can be no doubt about that. This answer instantly raises the question, But *what is?* That question can, at present, receive no answer except an evasive one. Its turn has not yet come. It must "bide its time." It must be turned away from us, or, like a mask, it must be taken off and laid aside. But its announcement proclaims and fixes one great section of philosophy—the division which has for its object the problem, *What* is true being—absolute existence? This branch of the science is usually and rightly denominated ONTOLOGY (λόγος τῶν ὄντων — the science of that which truly is).

§ 55. The preliminary business of philosophy is, as has been said, so to turn round her whole array of questions as to make the first last, and the last first; and this she can accomplish only by finding such answers as may serve to send the questions away from her without, in any degree, resolving them.

Their solution can commence only when the whole revolution is effected, and when that which naturally comes last has been *made* to come first, and conversely; because the questions which *are made* to come first contain all the elements necessary to the solution of those which *naturally* come first; and, therefore, the latter cannot be entertained until after the former have been disposed of. Each answer, as it wards off its own question, must always be of such a character as to bring round a new question into view. This is exemplified in the case of the answer which wards off the general problem of ontology. The question, in its shortest form, is, *What* is? And the parrying answer is—What is, is what *is known.* But that answer, while it sends away from us, in the mean time, the ontological question, instantly brings before us a new question, or rather new section of questions—this: But *what* is known, and *what* is knowing? This movement determines another whole section of philosophy; indeed, it completes the revolution, or at least we have now merely to find out the truly first question in regard to knowing and the known, to have before us the true beginning, the really proximate question of philosophy. This division explores and explains the laws both of knowing and of the known—in other words, the conditions of the conceivable; laying out the necessary laws, as the laws of *all* knowing, and of thinking, and the contingent laws as the laws of

It must be made to revolve away from us, in order to bring round the *epistemology*, which, though it naturally comes last, is truly first in order.

our knowing and of *our* thinking. This section of the science is properly termed the EPISTEMOLOGY—the doctrine or theory of knowing, just as ontology is the doctrine or theory of being (λόγος τῆς ἐπιστήμης—the science of true knowing). It answers the general question, "What is knowing and the known?"—or more shortly, "What is knowledge?" The ontology cannot be approached, or even looked at, until this division has been thoroughly explicated.

Epistemology and ontology the two main divisions of philosophy.

§ 56. These, then, are the two main branches of our science. It is clear that we cannot declare *what is*—in other words, cannot get a footing on ontology until we have ascertained *what is known*—in other words, until we have exhausted all the details of a thorough and systematic epistemology. It may be doubtful whether we can get a footing on ontology even then. But, at any rate, we cannot pass to the problem of absolute existence, except through the portals of the solution to the problem of knowledge. Because we are scarcely in a position to *say* what is, unless we have at least attempted to *know* what is; and we are certainly not in a position to know what is, until we have thoroughly examined and resolved the question—What is the meaning of *to know?* What is knowledge? What is knowing and the known? Until these questions be answered, it is vain and futile to say that absolute existence is that which *is known*.

§ 57. But even after the questions of the epistemology have been resolved—even after all the laws of knowledge have been explored and laid out—are we in a whit better position to take up and answer the question—What is? We are in a somewhat better position; but our approach to ontology is still fenced and obstructed by a most baffling consideration, which is this:

The epistemology does of itself afford no entrance to ontology. Why not?

§ 58. Absolute Being may be, very possibly, that which we are ignorant of. Our ignorance is excessive—it is far more extensive than our knowledge. This is unquestionable. After we have fixed, then, the meaning, the conditions, the limits, the extent, and the capacities of knowledge, it still seems quite possible, indeed highly probable, that absolute existence may escape us, by throwing itself under the cover, or within the pale, of our ignorance. We may be altogether ignorant of *what is*, and may thus be unable to predicate anything at all about it. This is a most confounding obstacle to our advance. It has indeed, as yet, brought every inquirer to the dust, and thrown back every foot that has attempted to scale the hitherto unbreached and apparently impregnable fastnesses of ontology. Before commencing our operations, therefore, it will be prudent and necessary to hold a council of war.

Because "Absolute Existence" may be that which we are ignorant of.

§ 59. This difficulty is to be surmounted, not by

This consideration necessitates a new section of philosophy called the *agnoiology*. Its business.

denying or blinking our ignorance, but by facing it; and the only way of facing it, is by instituting an inquiry into its nature. We must examine and fix what ignorance is—what we are, and can be, ignorant of. And thus we are thrown upon an entirely new research, constituting an intermediate section of philosophy which we term the AGNOIOLOGY, or theory of ignorance (λόγος τῆς ἀγνοιας, the theory of true ignorance). The result of this research is given out in its proper place in these Institutes.

Now we can settle the problem of ontology—and how.

§ 60. *Now* our course is pretty clear, and our way made straight before us. The epistemology has fixed what alone any intelligence can know. The agnoiology has fixed what alone any intelligence can be ignorant of—consequently Absolute Existence being either that which we know, or that which we are ignorant of (and it shall be demonstrated that there is no other alternative), it must respond either to the result of the epistemology, or to the result of the agnoiology. But if the result of the epistemology, and the result of the agnoiology are coincident (and their coincidence shall be demonstrated), then it matters not whether Absolute Being be that which we know, or that which we are ignorant of; we can demonstratively fix its character all the same; we can screw it down, whichever of them it be; we can attach to it a predicate, which is all that is wanted, and which is all that philosophy

promises as her ultimate bestowal on mankind. All this shall be clearly shown in the ontology—the conclusion of which need not now be forestalled. This only may be added, that in solving the problem—*What is?* we shall have resolved definitively the ultimate or last question of all philosophy—that query which is always the first to make its appearance, but which requires to be staved off and off, until we have got in hand all the elements of its solution—What is Truth?

§ 61. This paragraph need merely recapitulate that the three divisions of philosophy, as laid down in these Institutes, are, *first*, The Epistemology, or theory of knowledge; *secondly*, The Agnoiology, or theory of ignorance; and, *thirdly*, The Ontology, or theory of being; and that this arrangement is not dictated by the choice or preference of any individual thinker, but by the very necessity of the case, which will not admit of the problems of philosophy being taken up in any other order.

Recapitulation of the three sections. 1. Epistemology. 2. Agnoiology. 3. Ontology. This arrangement not arbitrary, but necessary.

§ 62. The confusion which arises when any other division than that here laid down is attempted, is unspeakable—the dead lock which ensues is inextricable. It is not going too far to affirm that the whole embroilment of philosophy is due to the practice usually indulged in, and never systematically abstained from, of taking in hand the question of

The necessity of keeping these divisions perfectly distinct.

ontology, and of predicating something about Being before the question of epistemology—that is, the question as to knowledge and its laws—has been thoroughly worked out and cleared. This, however, is a mere consequence or accompaniment of the great retarding cause of philosophy already pointed out—of the attempt, namely, to get to the end, *before* we have got to the beginning. Numerous examples of the fatal effects of this preposterous (in the exact sense of that word) procedure, will come under our notice in the course of this work. It should, therefore, be especially borne in mind, that the epistemology excludes most rigorously from its consideration, every opinion, and every question as to "being" or *existence*. It deals only with knowing.

The natural oversights of thought are rectified in these three sections.

§ 63. In connection with these remarks on the *what* (or business), on the *why* (or reason), and on the *how* (or method), of philosophy in general; and on the character and details of these Institutes in particular, an observation, entitled to a separate paragraph, remains to be made, which is this, that the correction of the inadvertencies of our natural thinking will be seen to be carried on throughout each of the sections of the system. Our natural oversights in regard to knowing and the known, are taken up and put right in the epistemology; our natural oversights in regard to ignorance are taken up and put right in the agnoiology; and our natural oversights

in regard to being are taken up and put right in the ontology.

§ 64. Another consideration, also, of some importance, must here be noticed, as tending to obviate any disappointment which may arise in the reader's mind from finding that the results and conclusions reached in this system are not at all times—are not, indeed, at any time during his ordinary moods, and these must occupy about ninety-nine parts of his existence—present to his conviction with the force and the vivacity which he might think desirable if they were true. But this is neither desirable nor necessary. Their perpetual presence would convert him from an agreeable human being into a nuisance, both to himself and others. It is the worst species of pedantry to entertain and parade the conclusions of science, either to ourselves or others, when engaged in the common business and intercourse of life; just as it is the worst species of prudence, to embrace the plausibilities of common opinion, the maxims of the *salons* and of the thoroughfares, when ministering at the altars of science. The two things should be kept everlastingly apart. All that is necessary is, that the reader should *know* that what is laid before him is the truth;—it is not necessary that he should *feel* it to be so. The *knowledge* of it is all in all; the want of *feeling* about it is of no moment whatever, and ought not

Remarks obviating any objections to the system, on the ground that its conclusions cannot at all times be present to the mind.

to be listened to for an instant as any argument against its certainty. The interests of Truth would indeed be in a poor way, and our conception of her character not very exalted, were we to allow these interests to suffer from our inability to keep our faculties, at all times, upon a level with her astonishing revelations. To make truth contingent on the ordinary susceptibilities of man, would be to reduce her to a most deplorable dependency. To be suspicious of *her*, because *our* minds are not, at all times, or often, equal "to the height of her great argument," is no unfrequent practice; but it is carrying scepticism a little too far. It is probable that many philosophers, and more people than they, have actually regarded truth as untrue, because man's faculties are incapable of grasping her deepest disclosures, except at rare intervals, and when on their widest stretch. But why can we not be satisfied in metaphysics, as we are in every other science, with *knowing* the demonstrated conclusions without thinking it necessary, at every moment, to *realise* them, as it is called? In philosophy alone, people are very prone to set down their own incompetency to realise the truth, to bring it home to their homely convictions, as, in a manner, fatal to her cause. But this incompetency is a mere accident, it is entitled to no consideration; and it is not held, by these very people, to prejudice the truth in any other science. Why should it, then,

in metaphysics? People pay a very poor compliment, not only to the truth, but also to the higher reason with which they have been endowed, when they suppose that the latter is subject to the jurisdiction of their own vulgar opinions, that it is at all affected by the cavils of their own ordinary judgment, or that it can be turned out of its inflexible orbit by any collision with those earth-born and evanescent meteors of their own customary thinking, which are perpetually crossing and obscuring, but certainly never deflecting, its colossal transit through the skies.

§ 65. The following is a case in point. The earth and "all that it inherit" are whirling through space with a velocity which it requires rather large numbers to compute. We *know* that to be a fact; but we cannot *feel* it;—indeed, we feel the very contrary. In spite of science, we believe ourselves, at least when we are lying still, to be imperturbably at rest; and this conviction is equally shared in by the profoundest astronomer reclining on his couch of down, and by the most unscientific peasant stretched upon his pallet of straw. An astronomer is not always an astronomer. When he comes down from his observatory, he leaves his computations and his demonstrations behind him. He has done with them for, at least, a while. He thinks, and feels, and speaks just like other people; he takes the

Continuation of these remarks.

same view of the heavens and the earth that ordinary mortals do. His hat is bigger than the sun. So of the metaphysician. He is not always a metaphysician. In common life, he can think, and feel, and speak, it is to be hoped, just like his neighbours. He can look at things just as they look at them, otherwise they would have excellent reasons for regarding (as they are too apt to do without any such good provocation) his very name as an abomination. It is enough for him to *know* that there is a higher region of thought and of truth into which he can ascend at will, with those who choose to go along with him, though neither he nor they need be constantly resident therein. Is a poet always a poet? No. Down both poet and astronomer, and down, too, philosopher must come—down from their aërial altitudes—their proper regions—and out of these regions they must consent to pass the greater portion of their time. But when the philosopher *is* a philosopher; when he has put on, like Prospero, his "garment;" when he has ascended to *his* watch-tower in the skies, and when he gives out the result, let him play the philosopher to some purpose, and let him not be a babbler in the land. Are we to suppose that the *real* revolutions of the celestial spheres differ widely from their *apparent* courses; and that the same great law does not rule, and may not be found out, in the movements of human thought—that mightier than planetary scheme?

§ 66. It may now be proper, although it is by no means pleasant, to make a remark or two on the *tone* in which this work may appear to be conceived and executed. It may seem to adopt a somewhat presumptuous line of exposition in undertaking to lay down the laws, not only of *our* thinking and knowing, but of *all* possible thinking and knowing. This charge is answered simply by the remark that it would be still more presumptuous to exclude any possible thinking, any possible knowing, any possible intelligence, from the operation of these laws—for the laws here referred to are necessary truths—their opposites involve contradictions, and, therefore, the supposition that any intelligence can be exempt from them is simply nonsense; and, in so far, as senselessness is a sin, this supposition is sinful. It supposes that Reason can be Unreason, that wisdom can be madness, that sense can be nonsense, that cosmos can be chaos. This system escapes that sin. It is, therefore, less presumptuous, and more becoming in its moral spirit than those hypocritical inquiries which, by way of exalting the highest of all reason, hold that this may, in certain cases, be emancipated from its own necessary laws, and that these laws should be laid down as binding, not universally, but only on human intelligence. This restriction is wicked as well as weak.

Remark obviating any objection to this system on the score of presumption.

§ 67. But is it altogether essential, the reader may

The indispensable extension of the necessary laws to *all* reason.

ask, to the purposes of this system, that the necessary laws should be laid down thus extensively? Is it not sufficient to fix them as absolutely authoritative over human intelligence only? Because, if this were sufficient, it might be as well not to carry them out over *all* knowledge, or to insist upon their being valid for reason universally. But, good reader, this is not sufficient. It is absolutely indispensable (this must be confessed in the plainest terms)—it is absolutely indispensable for the salvation of our argument, from beginning to end, that these necessary laws should be fixed as authoritative, not over human reason only, but as binding on all possible intelligence. It is not possible, therefore, for the system to adopt any such suggestion as that here thrown out. And if the reader has any further misgivings as to the propriety of our course, we would recommend him to consider whether *he* does not hold that *all* reason is bound by the law of contradiction as expounded in § 28. Of course, if we may assign to intelligence universally *any one* necessary condition of thought and knowledge, the whole question is at an end, and must be held to be decided in favour of the views of this system. It should be added that the system does not assume, at the outset, that there is any intelligence except the human. Such an assumption is not necessary to enable it to get under weigh, and would, therefore, be altogether irrelevant. But it maintains that, if

there be any other intelligence (either actual or possible) besides man's, that intelligence must conform to the necessary laws, these being the essential conditions and constituents of all intellect and of all thought.

§ 68. As a further objection to this system, it may perhaps be urged that the system is guilty of the inconsistency of representing man as capable of conceiving what he cannot conceive. It is guilty of nothing of the kind. The system only represents man as capable of conceiving that many things which are inconceivable by him are, or, at any rate, may be conceived by other and higher intelligences (if such there be, for this is not assumed), and that therefore these things are not to be laid down as *absolutely* or *in themselves* inconceivable. Though they are inconceivable *by us*, they are still to be placed under the category of the conceivable,—a category or general head which, according to this system, has two subdivisions; to wit, *first*, the conceivable by us, and *secondly*, the conceivable by some other intelligence (actual or possible), though not conceivable by us. This latter head comprehends what we can conceive to be conceivable, though we cannot *directly* conceive it. Thus the category of the conceivable is *one*, though it has two subdivisions. Over against this category, and clearly to be distinguished from it, stands the cate-

An objection to the system on the score of inconsistency obviated.

gory of the absolutely, and, in itself, inconceivable —this throughout its whole extent is convertible with the contradictory, the absurd.

Objection retorted. The confusion of philosophers in regard to the conceivable and the inconceivable.

§ 69. To retort this charge of inconsistency, it may here be remarked, that the ordinary philosophical distinction of the conceivable and the inconceivable is a distinction which sets every rule of logical division at defiance, and that it is one which, for long, has overridden speculation with a most calamitous oppression. The distinction is this: Things (using that word in a very general sense) are divided by philosophers into things conceivable by us on the one hand (these are placed under a distinct head or category by themselves, as the only properly conceivable), and, on the other hand, into things, still conceivable, though not conceivable by us—and these are laid down under a separate head as the properly inconceivable, the inconceivable without any qualification. Now, observe what follows from this: the inconceivable, as here laid down, is thus slumped together in the same general category with the *absolutely* inconceivable; the inconceivable *by us*, is placed in the same category with the inconceivable *in itself*—that is, with the contradictory and nonsensical. Surely the inconceivable by us, but still conceivable by others, has a much closer affinity to the conceivable by us than it has to the absolutely contradictory; yet our philosophers have not thought

so. Hence they have laid down a distinction, which is no distinction, but a confusion, a blundering dogma which has been most injurious—which has, indeed, been nothing less than ruinous for a time to the cause of genuine speculation.

§ 70. Suppose that a natural philosopher, dealing with the ponderable and the imponderable (if there be such a thing), were to divide the ponderable into the liftable *by us* on the one hand (calling this only the properly ponderable), and, on the other hand, into the still liftable, though not by us; and suppose he were to call the latter the unliftable, the imponderable without any qualification;—in that case Ben Lomond would be set down among the imponderables, for it is certainly not liftable by us; it would be classed along with things which are absolutely and in themselves imponderable—if any such things there be. And there are such things, though perhaps natural philosophy takes no account of them. The days of the week are imponderable; and therefore Ben Lomond, according to this division, would have no more weight than those abstractions which we call Monday and Tuesday. This is precisely the distinction which philosophers have generally taken between the conceivable and the inconceivable. Where would natural science have been had *it* indulged generally in divisions of this description? It would have been where metaphysical philosophy is now.

This confusion illustrated.

All other systems make game of the laws of thought.

§ 71. The confusion here pointed out and illustrated, has led all philosophers to make game of the laws of thought. Confounding the simply inconceivable by us with the absolutely inconceivable, they tell us that many things which are absolutely inconceivable we must nevertheless conceive to exist —that is to say, we must think what the laws of thinking (according to the showing of these philosophers) prevent us from thinking. We are called upon to think a thing *to exist*, which, in the same breath, they tell us we cannot think *at all*. In a word, they tell us that we can think what they tell us we cannot think; and what is that but making game of the laws of thought, and turning the whole code into ridicule? For example, the law is laid down broadly that we cannot think anything out of relation to ourselves; but before the sound of these words has died away, we are told that we must and do think things out of relation to ourselves. Surely there is something very wrong in that statement. Either the law which it lays down is not the law, or, if the law, it must be so binding that we cannot think things otherwise than as it prescribes. But philosophers do not like to be held too tightly to their own terms; they do not always relish being taken at their own word. They are very fond of playing fast and loose with their own statements.

§ 72. Perhaps it may be thought that the confusion or inconsistency here pointed out admits of extrication. It admits of none—at least of none which is at all satisfactory. The philosopher may say that, by the "absolutely inconceivable," he means merely the inconceivable *by us*. If so, then his statement just amounts to this, that we may rationally suppose many things to exist which are simply inconceivable by us, but still conceivable by other intelligences, actual or possible. But in making that statement, why should he confound thought and language by breaking down, or at any rate by not keeping up, so palpable and important a distinction as that which subsists between the simply inconceivable by us, and the absolutely inconceivable in itself? The former falls properly under the category of the conceivable; because if a thing is conceivable *at all*, if we can conceive it as conceivable by any possible intelligence, that consideration is sufficient to place it in this category: the latter constitutes the category of the properly inconceivable, and is, as has been said, convertible with the contradictory.

The inconsistency of philosophers inextricable.

§ 73. Again, when the absurdity of saying that "we ought to think something to exist which we cannot think at all," is pointed out, the philosopher's defence is sometimes this: When hard pressed, he says that by "think," in the latter clause, he means

Their laws of thought always turn out, at best, to be mere laws of imagination.

"imagine,"—*picture to the fancy.* This admission brings to light a new feature in his case. We thought that he had been treating us to an exposition of the laws of *thought;* but no, he is treating us, it seems, only to an exposition of the laws of *imagination.* Had this been explained at the outset, no possible mistake could have arisen, and the truth of all that was advanced would have been readily admitted. But it is not explained, either at the outset or in the sequel. From first the psychologist gives out that he is laying down the laws, not of imagination, but of intellect—not of fancying, but of thinking: and therefore his table is either contradictory (§ 71), or it is confused (§ 72), or it places before us something different from what it professes to place before us, and something which we do not want (§ 73). These remarks apply not to any one psychologist, but to all—indeed, rather to the whole system than to its expounders. Who is chiefly responsible for confounding the conceivable and the inconceivable, it would be very difficult to say.

This system does not make game of the laws of thought.

§ 74. The system contained in these Institutes does not make game of the laws of thought. It means what it says, and it stands to what it says. What it declares we cannot think, it declares we can *not* think. It does not make the tail of an affirmation eat in its own head, as all our popular psychology does. It lays down the laws of thought, not as laws

which exist only to be broken, but as laws which exist only to be binding. It teaches that man thinks and can think only in conformity with the laws of intelligence, and not, as all psychology teaches, that man thinks and can think in opposition to these laws. It intends to be taken literally at its word.

§ 75. All other systems controvert each other largely, and at many points. This system is incontrovertible, it is conceived, in every point; but, at the very utmost, it is controvertible only in its starting-point, its fundamental position. This, therefore, seems to be no little gain to philosophy, to concentrate all possible controversy upon a single point—to gather into one focus all the diverging lances of the foe, and direct them on a single topic. The system, as has been remarked, holds this point, no less than all the others, to be indisputable; but should this be doubted, it cannot be doubted that it is the *only* disputable point. Hence the system humbly piques itself on having abridged the grounds of philosophical controversy—on having, if not abolished, at any rate reduced them to their narrowest possible limits.

It abridges the grounds of controversy.

§ 76. This introduction may be appropriately terminated by an explanation of the means by which these Institutes have succeeded in getting to the

Conclusion of introduction explaining how the starting-point of philosophy is reached, (§§ 76-85).

beginning, or absolute starting-point, of philosophy —for the beginning will be itself better understood if the reader has been brought to understand how it has been reached. Indeed, unless he understands this, the starting-point will probably appear to him to be arbitrary; he will still be possessed with a suspicion that some other starting-point was possible. But so soon as he sees how this starting-point is attained, that suspicion will disappear: he will see that no other beginning is possible.

How the starting-point is reached.

§ 77. The epistemology, as has been said, is the proximate section of our science: that is, it is the first which has to be entered on, and got through. The comprehensive question, coextensive with this whole division, is,—What is knowledge?—what is knowing and the known? But this, in its present shape, is a most elusory, unmanageable, and indeed incomprehensible problem. We cannot lay hold of it. It seems to have no handle. It presents no prominence, big or little. Where is the right end of this ball of string? Is it a ball of string, or is it a ball of stone? Because, if it be a ball of stone, it will scarcely be worth while to try to unwind it. No man's fingers can untwist a cannon-ball. It is, however, a ball of string, only the difficulty is to find its outermost end; and, until this be found, the attempt to wind it off is of course hopeless.

At any rate, let us take especial care (a caution which, as we have already hinted, has been far too little heeded) not to wind *on* another ball *over* this one. But to speak less figuratively;—although we have found out that the epistemology is the proximate division of philosophy, we have still to discover what the proximate question is in the vague, confused, and comprehensive problem which occupies this section. The difficulty is not merely to break it down, but to find the fundamental question, the one and true and only beginning, among its fragments.

§ 78. The Platonic Socrates is gravelled by this same difficulty in "the Theætetus" of Plato. Although Socrates sees the difficulty very clearly, he does not see the solution,—or at any rate he keeps it to himself. "What is knowledge?" he asks Theætetus. "Knowledge," answers Theætetus, "consists of geometry and such other matters as we have been now talking about." The reply of Socrates is very happy and highly characteristic, though not very instructive. "You have answered," says he, "most generously—indeed, most munificently;—I may say, quite like a prince. Being asked for a single thing, you have given me I know not how many things; and that, Theætetus, is what I call acting nobly towards an old *ignoramus* like me." This banter throws Theætetus somewhat aback; upon which Socrates proceeds to explain himself.

Plato, in Theætetus, fail to reach the starting-point.

"You have rather missed," says he, "the point of my question. I did not ask you what *things* there is a *knowledge of*,—but what knowledge *itself* is." This explanation, although it lays the finger on the right point, does not mend matters much; for when the two friends proceed to discuss this question, keeping as near to it as they can, which is not very near, the question is very soon lost sight of, like a river running underground, to make its appearance in occasional glimpses at the surface in some of the other dialogues. Plato did not get, or at any rate did not *show* that he had got to the beginning, the starting-point of philosophy.

§ 79. We must try, therefore, what we can make of this question (What is knowledge?) for ourselves. It constitutes, as has been said, the general problem of the first section of our science. Why, then, can we not make it the immediate object of our inquiry? The reader may suppose that although it might be more convenient to begin with a simpler question, if one could be obtained, still, in the absence of this, it might answer well enough to take in hand the question we have got. But if that could be done, philosophy would be a mere arbitrary science,—a system contingent for its commencement not on the necessity of the case, but on the choice or convenience of the philosopher. And this circumstance would be altogether destructive of the truth and

excellence of philosophy. It would vitiate the character,—it would take away the value,—it would let out the soul of her instructions. It is not, therefore, mainly on account of the complication of this question that it has to be set aside,—nor is it mainly on account of any expected simplicity in the new question, that we are anxious to search it out, and bring it forward. No doubt the one question is the more complex, and the other will be found the more simple; but that is a secondary consideration, and one which does not *necessarily* compel us to put aside the original question, and go in search of a new one. But unless we are compelled to this by *necessity*, and not by choice or convenience, our course would be optional and arbitrary; and this it must not be, if our philosophy is to be given out, or is to be accepted, as true. No man is entitled, in philosophy, to say that a thing is true, if he can possibly *help* thinking it to be true. No man is entitled, in philosophy, to take any one step, if he could possibly have taken any other.

§ 80. Why, then, can we not take up and discuss at once the question—What is knowledge? For this very sufficient reason, that it is not intelligible. No intellect can attach any but the very vaguest meaning to the question as it stands. It is ambiguous: it has more meanings than one; and therefore it cannot be understood in its present form. We

Why the question—What is knowledge? cannot be the starting-point.

are, therefore, *forced* to turn away from it; because no man can deal with what cannot be understood. Thus our relinquishment of the question is not optional, but necessitated; it is not chosen, but compulsory: and thus, too, our selection of a new question, as our starting-point, is not simply convenient; it is constraining: it is not eligible, but inevitable. So far, therefore, our procedure is not arbitrary, but compelled—as it always must be, if any good is to come of our speculations.

This question resolved into two questions.

§ 81. The question, however, which we are seeking, must still have some reference to the question—What is knowledge? because this, in its obscurity, is the capital problem of our first section. The new question must be this question in a clear, presentable, and intelligible form. Now, when well considered, it will be found that the question, What is knowledge? must mean one of two things. It must mean either, *first*, What is knowledge in so far as its kinds *differ?* In plainer words—What different kinds of knowledge are there? Or it must mean, *secondly*, What is knowledge in so far as its various kinds *agree?* In plainer words—What is the *one* invariable feature, quality, or constituent, *common* to all our cognitions, however diverse and multifarious these, in other respects, may be?

§ 82. The unintelligible question, What is knowledge? having been resolved into the two intelligible questions, *first*, What different kinds of knowledge are there? and, *secondly*, What identical point is there in all the kinds of knowledge?—we have to consider which of these questions is *our* question—which of them is the truly proximate question of the epistemology. The one or the other of them must be this; for the question, What is knowledge? is not susceptible of being analysed into any other alternatives than these two. Which of them, then, is *our* question? Theætetus, it will have been observed (§ 78), was of opinion, rather unguardedly, that the first was the question of philosophy. Socrates very speedily undeceived him; for surely no philosophy is required to teach us that the different kinds of knowledge are the mathematical, the historical, the grammatical, and so forth. The other alternative, therefore (although Socrates here gives us no light), must be the question of philosophy, and it is so. It is the foundation-question—the beginning, with no anterior beginning; and its answer is the absolute starting-point of metaphysics, or speculative science.

Which of them is *our* question,—and the first in philosophy.

§ 83. An anterior question may indeed be raised—*Is* there any identical quality, any common centre, any essential rallying-point in all our cognitions? But that question can be determined only by the

result of the research.* If there is no such point, or if no such point can be found, no philosophy is possible; but if such a common point or quality can be found, and is found, then philosophy can exist, and can go forth tracing out the consequences which flow from the answer she has given. That there *is* such a point, is proved by the fact that such a point has been *found*.

That philosophy has a starting-point is proved by the fact that its starting-point has been found.

§ 84. The common point, or quality, or feature in all our knowledge must be such an element as is necessary or essential to the constitution of every datum of cognition. In other words, it must be such an element that, if taken away, the whole datum is, of necessity, extinguished, and its restoration rendered absolutely impossible until the missing element is restored. The element which we must find as a reply to the first question of philosophy must be of this character, otherwise it would not answer the purposes of a strictly-reasoned scheme: it would not be the *one* point present in *every* cognition.

Starting-point must state the essential of knowledge. Experience may confirm, but reason alone can establish its truth.

* Perhaps this question ought to have been discussed in the Introduction as one of the preliminary articles of the science. Its settlement, showing that there is such a point or element, should, in strict order, precede the proposition which declares *what* that element is. But such advantages in the way of clearness and intelligibility are gained by keeping the starting-point (Proposition I.) just as it is,—for, after all, it is the true commencement; and so much discussion arises under the question referred to, that it has been thought better to introduce it, at a later stage, into the body of the work. It forms the thesis of Proposition VI.

Experience may confirm the truth of the answer; but Reason alone can establish it effectually.

§ 85. To re-state, then, the fundamental or proximate question of philosophy, it is this—What is the *one* feature which is identical, invariable, and essential in all the varieties of our What is the standard factor which while all else varies? What is the *ens unum in omnibus notitiis?* Re-statement of the first or proximate

§ 86. That is the first question of philosophy—the *only* first question which it can have; and its answer is the absolute starting-point of metaphysics. That answer is given in the FIRST PROPOSITION of these Institutes, which proposition it constitutes. Its the sta poi fo

SECTION I.

THE EPISTEMOLOGY, OR THEORY OF KNOWING.

PROPOSITION I.

THE PRIMARY LAW OR CONDITION OF ALL KNOWLEDGE.

Along with whatever any intelligence knows, it must, as the ground or condition of its knowledge, have some cognisance of *itself*.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Self* or the "me" is the common centre, the continually known rallying-point, in which all our cognitions meet and agree. It is the *ens unum, et semper cognitum, in omnibus notitiis.* Its apprehension is essential to the existence of our, and of all, knowledge. And thus Proposition I. forms an explicit answer to the question laid down in the Introduction (§ 85) as the first question of philosophy: What is the one feature present in all our knowledge,—the common point in which all our cognitions unite and agree,—the element in which they are identical? The *ego* is this feature, point, or element: it is the common centre which is at all

Prop. I. answers the first question of philosophy.

PROP. I.

times known, and in which all our cognitions, however diverse they may be in other respects, are known as uniting and agreeing; and besides the *ego*, or oneself, there is no other identical quality in our cognitions—as any one may convince himself upon reflection. He will find that he cannot lay his finger upon anything except *himself*, and say—This article of cognition I must know along with whatever I know.

It expresses the most general and essential law of all knowledge.

2. The apprehension of oneself by oneself is the most general and essential circumstance on which knowledge depends, because, unless this law be complied with, no intellectual apprehension of any kind is possible; and wherever it is complied with, some kind of knowledge is necessary. Each of the subsequent propositions (with the exception of the last of the epistemology) gives expression to a necessary law of knowledge; but this first proposition lays down the fundamental necessity to which all intelligence is subject in the acquisition of knowledge. It states the primary canon in the code of reason from which all the other necessary laws are derivations.

3. The condition of knowledge here set forth is not an operation which is performed once for all, and then dispensed with, while we proceed to the cognition of other things. Neither is it an operation which is ever entirely intermitted, even when our

attention appears to be exclusively occupied with matters quite distinct from ourselves. The knowledge of self is the running accompaniment to all our knowledge. It is through and along with *this* knowledge that all our *other* knowledge is taken in. PROP. I. It declares that self-consciousness is never entirely suspended when the mind knows anything.

4. An objection may be raised to this proposition on the ground that it is contradicted by experience. It may be said that when we are plunged in the active pursuits of life, or engaged in the contemplation of natural objects, we frequently pass hours, it may be days, without ever thinking of ourselves. This objection seems to militate against the truth of our first proposition. How is it to be obviated? Objection that self-consciousness seems at times to be extinct.

5. If the proposition maintained, that our attention was at all times clearly and forcibly directed upon ourselves, or that the *me* was constantly a prominent object of our regard, the objection would be fatal to its pretensions. The proposition would be at once disproved by an appeal to experience; for it is certain that during the greater part of our time we take but little heed of ourselves. But a man may take very little note, without taking absolutely no note of himself. The proposition merely asserts that a man (or any other intelligence) is never altogether incognisant, is never totally oblivious, of himself, even when his attention is most engaged with other matters. However far it may Objection obviated. Proposition explained.

PROP. I.

be carried, the forgetfulness of self is only partial and apparent; it is never real and total. There is always a latent reference of one's perceptions and thoughts to oneself as the person who experiences them, which proves that, however deeply we may be engrossed with the objects before us, we are never stripped entirely of the consciousness of ourselves. And this is all that our proposition contends for. There is a calm unobtrusive current of self-consciousness flowing on in company with all our knowledge, and during every moment of our waking existence; and this self-consciousness is the ground or condition of all our other consciousness. Nine hundred and ninety-nine parts of our attention may be always devoted to the thing or business we have in hand: it is sufficient for our argument if it be admitted that the thousandth part, or even a smaller fraction, of it is perpetually directed upon ourselves.

Our apparent inattention to self accounted for by the principle of familiarity.

6. But how is our apparent self-oblivion to be explained? If it is not to be accounted for on the supposition that we ever drop entirely out of our own observation, we must be prepared to explain it on some other principle. And so we are. This oversight, which in many cases is all but complete, may be accounted for in the most satisfactory manner by means of a principle of our nature which may be termed the law of familiarity, the effect of

which law is well expressed in the old adage, "Familiarity breeds neglect." Whatever we are extremely intimate with, we are very apt to overlook; and precisely in proportion to the novelty or triteness of any event are the degrees of our attention called forth and exercised. We are enchained by the comparatively rare,—we are indifferent towards the comparatively frequent. That which is strange rivets our intellectual gaze,—that to which we are accustomed passes by almost unheeded. No influence has a greater effect than use and wont in dimming the eye of attention, and in blunting the edge of curiosity. This truth might be illustrated to an unlimited extent. It is sufficient for the present purpose to remark, that each of us is *more* familiar, and is therefore *less* occupied, with himself than he is with any other object that can be brought under his consideration. We are constantly present to ourselves,—hence we scarcely notice ourselves. We scarcely remark the condition of our knowledge, so unremittingly do we obey it. Indeed, in our ordinary moods we seem to slip entirely out of our own thoughts. This is the inevitable consequence of our close familiarity, our continual intimacy, our unbroken acquaintance with ourselves. But we never do slip entirely out of our own thoughts. However slender the threads may be which hold a man before his own consciousness, they are never completely broken through.

PROP. I.

PROP. I.

Also by the consideration that the ego is no object of sensible experience.

7. There is this consideration, also, to be taken into account, that the part of our knowledge which consists of things of sense always naturally attracts our attention much more forcibly than that part of it which is apprehended by intellect merely. But that which we call "I" is the object of intellect alone. *We* are never objects of sense to ourselves. A man can see and touch his body, but he cannot see and touch himself. This is not the place to offer any observations on the nature of the thinking principle. The assertion that it either is, or is not, immaterial, must at present be avoided, as dogmatic, hypothetical, and premature—indeed, as altogether inconsistent with the purpose and business of the epistemology. But this much may be affirmed, that, when the cognisance of self is laid down as the condition of all knowledge, this of course does not mean that certain objects of sense (external things, to wit) are apprehended through certain *other* objects of sense (our own bodies, namely), for such a statement would be altogether futile. It would leave the question precisely where it found it; for we should still have to ask, On what condition are these other objects of sense apprehended? To say that the things of sense are made known to us by means of the things of sense, does not advance us one step on the high-road to truth. The *me*, therefore, whether it be material or not—a point on which, at present, we offer no

opinion—is certainly not our own bodies, in so far as these are, or may be made, objects of sense,* and not being an object of sensible, but only of intellectual experience; and our attention being naturally held captive by the things of sense, it is not surprising that these latter should cause us to attend but slightly to ourselves in our ordinary moods, and in the common transactions of life. Thus the slight degree of notice which we usually take of ourselves is sufficiently explained, without its being necessary to resort to the hypothesis that the oversight is ever total, by means of these two circumstances—the operation of the law of familiarity, and the fact that the *ego* is no object of sensible experience.

A theory of self-consciousness at variance with Prop. I. refuted.

8. A theory of self-consciousness, opposed to the doctrine advanced in our first proposition, has been sometimes advocated. It reduces this operation to a species of reminiscence: it affirms that we are *first* cognisant of various sensible impressions, and are not conscious of ourselves until we reflect upon them *afterwards*. But this doctrine involves a contradiction; for it supposes us to recollect certain impressions to have been ours, *after* they have been experienced, which we did not know to be ours *when* they were experienced. A man cannot remember what never happened. If the impressions

* That the ego cannot be known to be material, is proved in its proper place. (See Proposition VIII.)

PROP. I.

were not known to be ours at the time, they could not subsequently be remembered to have been ours, because their recollection would imply that we remembered an antecedent connection between ourselves and them; which connection, however, had no place in our former experience, inasmuch as this theory declares that no self was in the first instance apprehended;—therefore, if the impressions are recognised on reflection to have been ours, they must originally have been known to be ours. In other words, we must have been conscious of self at the time when the impressions were made.

Importance of Prop. I. as foundation of the whole system.

9. Looked at in itself, or as an isolated truth, our first proposition is of no importance; but viewed as the foundation of the whole system, and as the single staple on which all the truths subsequently to be advanced depend, it cannot be too strongly insisted on, or too fully elucidated. Everything hinges on the stability which can be given to this proposition —on the acceptance it may meet with. If it falls, the system entirely fails; if it stands, the system entirely succeeds. It is to be hoped that the reader will not be stopped or discouraged by the apparent truism which it involves. He may think that, if the main truth which this philosophy has to tell him is, that all his cognitions and perceptions are known by him to be his own, he will have very little to thank it for. Let him go on, and see what follows. Mean-

while, considering the great weight which this proposition has to bear, we may be excused for bestowing a few more words on its enforcement. PROP. I.

10. If this first proposition is not very clearly confirmed by experience, it is at any rate not refuted by that authority. No one, by any effort of the mind, can ever apprehend a thing to the entire exclusion of himself. A man cannot wittingly leave himself altogether out of his account, and proceed to the consideration of the objects by which he is surrounded. On the contrary, he will find that, *nolens volens*, he carries himself consciously along with him, faint though the consciousness may be, in all the scenes through which he passes, and in all the operations in which he is engaged. He will find that, when he is cognisant of perceptions, he is always cognisant of them *as his*. But this cognisance is equivalent to self-consciousness, and therefore it is reasonable to conclude that our proposition is not only not overthrown, but, moreover, that it is corroborated by experience. It is not refuted but rather confirmed by experience.

11. But it is Reason alone which can give to this proposition the certainty and extension which are required to render it a sure foundation for all that is to follow. Experience can only establish it as a limited matter of fact; and this is not sufficient for the purposes of our subsequent demonstrations. It Its best evidence is reason, which fixes it as a necessary truth or axiom.

PROP. I. must be established as a necessary truth of reason—as a law binding on intelligence universally—as a conception, the opposite of which is a contradiction and an absurdity. Strictly speaking, the proposition cannot be demonstrated, because, being itself the absolute starting-point, it cannot be deduced from any antecedent data; but it may be explained in such a way as to leave no doubt as to its axiomatic character. It claims all the stringency of a geometrical axiom, and its claims, it is conceived, are irresistible. If it were possible for an intelligence to receive knowledge at *any one* time without knowing that it was his knowledge, it would be possible for him to do this at *all* times. So that an intelligent being might be endowed with knowledge without once, during the whole term of his existence, knowing that he possessed it. Is there not a contradiction involved in that supposition? But if that supposition be a contradiction, it is equally contradictory to suppose that an intelligence can be conscious of his knowledge, at any single moment, without being conscious of it as his. A man has knowledge, and is cognisant of perceptions only when he brings them home to himself. If he were not aware that they were his, he could not be aware of them at all. Can *I* know without knowing that it is *I* who know? No, truly. But if a man, in knowing anything, must always know that he knows it, he must always be self-conscious. And therefore

reason establishes our first proposition as a necessary truth—as an axiom, the denial of which involves a contradiction, or is, in plain words, nonsense. PROP. I.

12. Every metaphysical truth is faced by an opposite error which has its origin in ordinary thinking, and which it is the business of speculation to supplant. It will conduce, therefore, to the elucidation of our first proposition, if, following the plan laid down in the Introduction (§ 47), we place alongside of it the counter-proposition which it is designed to overthrow. *First counter-proposition:* "To constitute knowledge, all that is required is that there should be something to be known, and an intelligence to know it, and that the two should be present to each other. It is not necessary that this intelligence should be cognisant of itself at the same time." First counter-proposition.

13. This counter-proposition gives expression to the condition of knowledge, as laid down by ordinary thinking; and, it may be added, as laid down by our whole popular psychology. To constitute knowledge, there must be a subject or mind to know, and an object or thing to be known: let the two, subject and object (as they are frequently called, and as we shall frequently call them), be brought together, and knowledge is the result. This is the whole amount both of the common opinion and of the psychological doctrine as to the origin of knowledge. It embodies the result of ordinary thinking and of popular psychology.

PROP. 1.

The statement does not expressly deny that the subject must always know itself, in order to be cognisant of the object. It neither denies nor admits this in express terms; and, therefore, it is not easy to grapple with the ambiguity which it involves. But it certainly leans more to the side of denial than to the side of affirmation. The ordinary psychological doctrine seems to be, that the subject, or mind, is at times cognisant of itself to the exclusion of the object, and is at times cognisant of the object to the exclusion of itself, and again is at times cognisant both of itself and the object at once. Its general position is, beyond a doubt, merely this, that to constitute knowledge there must be an intelligent subject, and something for this intelligent subject to know—not that this intelligence must in every act of knowledge be cognisant of itself. But this doctrine is equivalent to the counter-proposition just advanced, because it declares that the cognisance of self is *not necessarily* the condition and concomitant of all knowledge.

It is generally the starting-point of psychology, as Prop. I. is the starting-point of metaphysics.

14. It is, however, rather from the conclusions reached by our popular psychology, than from any express statement it contains, that we may gather that its starting-point is our first counter-proposition. Supposing it to start from a denial of our first proposition, its subsequent conclusions are legitimately reached, as will appear in the sequel. Supposing it

to start from the admission of our first proposition, its illogical procedure would be altogether unparalleled. In justice, therefore, to our common psychology, we must suppose that it is grounded on our first counter-proposition, which, however, is the embodiment of a contradictory inadvertency of thought, by which all its subsequent proceedings are rendered untrue. The divarication of the two systems—our popular psychology on the one hand, founded on this counter-proposition, and exhibiting the erroneous results of ordinary thinking; and our strict metaphysics on the other hand, based on Proposition I., and presenting the results of the pure speculative reason—will begin to grow apparent in our second proposition.

15. To mark strongly the opposition between the propositions and the counter-propositions, it may be stated that the propositions declare what we *do* think, the counter-propositions declare what we *think* we think, but do *not* think: in other words, the propositions represent our *real* thinking, the counter-propositions our *apparent* thinking. For example, the first counter-proposition affirms that we can know things without knowing ourselves; but we only apparently do this—we only think that we know them without obeying the condition specified: in other words, we think, or rather think that we think, a contradiction; for it is impossible *really* to think a contradiction. The proposition states what we

A mark of distinction between the propositions and the counter-propositions.

PROP. I. really think and know as the condition of all our knowledge.

Prop. I. has some affinity to Pythagorean doctrine of numbers.

16. This first proposition expresses the principal law by which the unintelligible is converted into the intelligible. Let self be apprehended, and everything becomes (potentially) apprehensible or intelligible: let self be unapprehended, and everything remains necessarily inapprehensible or unintelligible. Considered under this point of view, the nearest approach made to this proposition in ancient times was probably the Pythagorean speculation respecting number as the ground of all conceivability. In nature, *per se*, there is neither unity nor plurality—nothing is one thing, and nothing is many things; because there cannot be one thing unless by a mental synthesis of many things or parts; and there cannot be many things or parts unless each of them is one thing: in other words, in nature, *per se*, there is nothing but absolute inconceivability. If she can place before us "thing," she cannot place before us *a* or *one* thing. So said Pythagoras. According to him, it is intelligence alone which contributes *a* to "thing"—gives unity, not certainly to plurality (for to suppose plurality is to suppose unity already given), but to that which is neither one nor many; and thus converts the unintelligible into the intelligible—the world of nonsense into the world of intellect.

PROP. I.

Misunderstanding as to Pythagorean doctrine.

17. This doctrine has been strangely misunderstood. Its expositors have usually thought that things are already numbered by nature either as one or many, and that all that Pythagoras taught was that we *re*-number them when they come before us; as if such a truism as that could ever have fallen from the lips of a great thinker; as if such a common-place was even entitled to the name of an opinion. A theory which professes to explain how things become intelligible must surely not suppose that they are intelligible before they become so. If a man undertakes to explain how water *becomes* ice, he must surely not suppose that it already *is* ice. He must date from some anterior condition of the water—its fluidity, for instance. Yet the Pythagorean theory of number as the ground of all intelligibility, is usually represented in this absurd light. Number, by which "thing" becomes intelligible, either as one or many, is believed to be admitted by this theory to be cleaving to "thing" even in its unintelligible state. Were this so, the thing would not be unintelligible, and there would be no explanation of the conversion of the incogitable (the anoetic) into the cogitable (the noetic), the very point which the theory professes to explicate. The theory may be imperfect; but it is one of the profoundest speculations of antiquity. The modern interpretation has emptied it of all significance.

PROP. I.

Prop. I. a higher generalisation of the Pythagorean law.

18. The law laid down in Proposition I. is merely a higher generalisation and clearer expression of the Pythagorean law of number. Whatever is to be known *must* be known as one, or as many, or as both; but whatever is to be known can be made *one* only by being referred to *one* self; and whatever is to be known can be made many only when each of the plurals has been made one by being referred to one self; and whatever is to be known can be made both one and many only by the same process being gone through,—that is to say, its unity and its plurality can only be effected by its reduction to the unity of self.

Anticipations of Prop. I. by the philosophers of Germany.

19. Passing over at present all intermediate approximations, we find anticipations of this first proposition in the writings of the philosophers of Germany. It puts in no claim to novelty, however novel may be the uses to which these Institutes apply it. Kant had glimpses of the truth; but his remarks are confused in the extreme in regard to what he calls the unity (analytic and synthetic) of consciousness. This is one of the few places in his works from which no meaning can be extracted. In his hands the principle answered no purpose at all. It died in the act of being born, and was buried under a mass of subordinate considerations before it can be said to have even breathed. Fichte got hold of it, and lost it—got hold of it, and lost it again, through a series of

eight or ten different publications, in which the truth slips through his fingers, when it seems just on the point of being turned to some account. Schelling promised magnificent operations in the heyday of his youth, on a basis very similar to that laid down in this first proposition. But the world has been waiting for the fulfilment of these promises,—for the fruits of that exuberant blossom,—during a period of more than fifty years. May its hopes be one day realised! No man is fitter, if he would but take the pains, than this octogenarian seer, to show that Speculation is not all one "barren heath." Hegel, —but who has ever yet uttered one intelligible word about Hegel? Not any of his countrymen,—not any foreigner,—seldom even himself. With peaks, here and there, more lucent than the sun, his intervals are filled with a sea of darkness, unnavigable by the aid of any compass, and an atmosphere, or rather vacuum, in which no human intellect can breathe. Hegel had better not be meddled with just at present. It is impossible to say to what extent this proposition coincides, or does not coincide, with his opinions; for whatever truth there may be in Hegel, it is certain that his meaning cannot be wrung from him by any amount of mere reading, any more than the whisky which is in bread —so at least we have been informed—can be extracted by squeezing the loaf into a tumbler. He requires to be *distilled*, as all philosophers do, more

PROP. I. or less—but Hegel to an extent which is unparalleled. His faults, and those of his predecessors subsequent to Kant, lie, certainly, not in the matter, but only in the manner of their compositions. Admirable in the substance and spirit and direction of their speculations, they are painfully deficient in the accomplishment of intelligible speech, and inhumanly negligent of all the arts by which alone the processes and results of philosophical truth can be recommended to the attention of mankind.

PROPOSITION II.

THE OBJECT OF ALL KNOWLEDGE.

The object of knowledge, whatever it may be, is always something more than what is naturally or usually regarded as the object. It always is, and must be, the object with the addition of oneself,—object *plus* subject,—thing, or thought, *mecum*. Self is an integral and essential part of every object of cognition.

DEMONSTRATION.

It has been already established as the condition of all knowledge, that a thing can be known only provided the intelligence which apprehends it knows itself at the same time. But if a thing can be known only provided oneself be known along with it, it follows that the thing (or thought) and oneself *together* must, in every case, be the object, the true and complete object, of knowledge; in other words, it follows

PROP. II. that that which we know always is and must be object *plus* subject, object *cum alio*,—thing or thought with an addition to it,—which addition is the *me*. Self, therefore, is an integral and essential part of every object of cognition.

Or, again. Suppose a case in which a thing or a thought is apprehended without the *me* being apprehended along with it. This would contradict Proposition I., which has fixed the knowledge of self as the condition of all knowledge. But Proposition I. is established; and therefore the *me* must in all cases form part of that which we know; and the only object which any intelligence ever has, or ever can have any cognisance of is, itself-in-union-with-whatever-it-apprehends.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

Reason for printing "itself-in-union-with-whatever-it-apprehends" as one word.

1. By printing *as one word* the seven last words of the Demonstration, a higher degree of intelligibility seems to be secured for what is here laid down as the universal object of knowledge, than might have been attained by printing these words as separate. Whether our position should be agreed with or not, it can scarcely be misunderstood.

2. By the object of knowledge, we are, of course, to understand the *whole* object of knowledge, what-

ever it may be at any particular time. It is quite possible for the mind to attend more to one part of any given presentation than to another. The mind does indeed usually attend most to that part of every presentation which is commonly called the thing. But the part so attended to is not the whole object; it is not properly *the* object of our knowledge. It is only part of the object, *the* object being that part together with the other part of the presentation (self, namely, or the subject) which is usually less attended to, but which is necessary to complete every datum of cognition. In other words, the object, usually so called, is only part of the object of the mind, although it may be that part which is most attended to. The object, properly so called, is always the object with the addition of the subject, because this alone is the whole object of our apprehension. That which is usually termed the object may be sometimes conveniently termed the objective part of the object of knowledge, and that which is usually called the subject may be sometimes conveniently called the subjective part of the object of knowledge. But the ordinary distinction of subject and object in which they are contrasted as the knowing and the known, and in which the subject is virtually denied to be any part of the object of our knowledge, is erroneous and contradictory, and has had a most mischievous effect on the growth and fortunes of philosophy.

By the object of knowledge is meant the whole object of knowledge.

PROP. II.

Change which an attention to the *condition* of knowledge effects upon the *object* of knowledge.

3. The ascertainment of the condition of knowledge as fixed in Proposition I. necessarily effects a great change in our conception of the object of knowledge. This change is expressed in Proposition II. But in our ordinary moods we regard the object of knowledge as something very different from what this proposition sets forth. Whatever it may be, we regard it as that thing or thought *without anything more*—without that addition which we call the subject or the me. Heretofore our conception of the object was the conception of object *sine alio;* now it is the conception of object *cum alio*, i. e. *mecum*.

Further illustrated by the speculative as distinguished from the ordinary mode of enumeration.

4. The change which the condition of knowledge effects upon the object of knowledge may be further understood by considering how very different the speculative enumeration of ourselves and things as based on Proposition II., is from the way in which we usually but erroneously enumerate them. We are cognisant of ourselves and of a number of surrounding objects. We look upon ourselves as numerically different from each of these things, just as each of them is numerically different from its neighbours. That is our ordinary way of counting. The speculative computation is quite different. Each of the things is always that thing *plus me*. So that supposing the things to be represented by the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and ourselves by the figure 5, while fol-

lowing the ordinary ciphering, we should count them and ourselves as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 we should, following the speculative ciphering count them and ourselves as 1 + 5, 2 + 5, 3 + 5, 4 + 5. And the result in each case equals me-in-union-with-the-thing, whatever it may be. Me-in-union-with-it—this synthesis is always the total datum or object which I know. This 5 (illustrative of the ego) is the standard factor in every reckoning, is always part of the object apprehended, and is the necessary condition of its apprehension. If we consider the things 1, 2, 3, 4, as forming *one* complexus in that case, it is still 1 + 5 = me-in-union-with-things. PROP. II.

5. The second counter-proposition, embodying the inconsiderate result of ordinary thinking, and brightening, by contrast, the truth of Proposition II., may be laid down as follows: *Second counter-proposition.*—"The object of knowledge is not, or, at any rate, need not be, anything more than what is usually regarded as the object. It may be the object without the mind's self, a thing (or a thought) *sine me.*" The inadvertency of ordinary thinking here pointed out, and corrected by Proposition II., is, that it overlooks a part of the object of knowledge, and gives out a part as the whole; just as, in counter-proposition I., it overlooks the condition of knowledge, and entertains an obscure notion that knowledge Second counter-proposition.

PROP. II.

might take place without this condition being complied with.

It is false, because counter-proposition I. is false.

6. This counter-proposition is grounded on a rock, if the first counter-proposition be true; but without this stay it has no support whatever. If it were possible for an intelligent being to apprehend anything without complying with the condition which declares that he must apprehend himself as well, it would, of course, be possible for him to know an object without knowing anything more—*i. e.*, without knowing himself along with it. But the first counter-proposition is false, because it contradicts Proposition I., which is a necessary and axiomatic truth of reason; and, therefore, the second counter-proposition, which depends entirely upon the first counter-proposition, must likewise be set aside as false and contradictory. It is scarcely necessary to call attention to the circumstance, that the maintenance of the second counter-proposition is quite incompatible with the admission of Proposition I. Those who have conceded our starting-point cannot stand by the deliverance of ordinary thinking in regard to the object of knowledge, but must embrace the doctrine laid down in Proposition II.

7. The second counter-proposition is not only the expression of the ordinary notion of mankind in

general with regard to the object of knowledge; it is, moreover, the exponent of the popular psychological doctrine on this point. In the science of the human mind, subject and object are not contrasted as two things, both of which are known, and must be known together; they are not laid down as two things which, in their synthesis, constitute the only object which any intelligence can apprehend. They are contrasted simply as that which knows, and as that which is known—the former being the subject, and the latter the object. This is the second step in the procedure of our ordinary pyschology. Just as, in its first position, it agrees with common thinking in overlooking the condition of all knowledge, and starts from the doctrine set forth in the first counter-proposition; so in its second position it also coincides with common opinion in overlooking a part of the object of knowledge, and in representing a mere part as the whole of that object. Here, again, however, its teaching is ambiguous. Our ordinary psychology does not expressly affirm that the object can be known without the subject or self being known; but by laying all its emphasis on the consideration, that in the constitution of knowledge the subject is the factor which knows, while the object is the factor which is known, it virtually teaches that doctrine. At any rate, our subsequent articles will make it plain that the psychology now in vogue virtually

PROP. II.

It expresses the ordinary notion, and also, generally, the psychological opinion as to the object of knowledge.

PROP. II. embraces the second counter-proposition, and denies by implication, if not directly, the truth of our second proposition, which declares, as a necessary truth of reason—as a conclusion which admits of no exception, and the reverse of which is nonsensical and contradictory—that the mind (*i. e.*, *every* mind) can have no object of any kind, except an object bound up and apprehended along with itself.

PROPOSITION III.

THE INSEPARABILITY OF THE OBJECTIVE AND THE SUBJECTIVE.

The objective part of the object of knowledge, though distinguishable, is not separable in cognition from the subjective part, or the ego; but the objective part and the subjective part do together constitute the unit or *minimum* of knowledge.

DEMONSTRATION.

If the objective part of knowledge were separable in cognition from the ego or subjective part, it could be apprehended without the ego being apprehended along with it. But this has been proved by Proposition II. to be impossible. Therefore the objective part of the object of knowledge is not separable in cognition from the subjective part, or the ego.

Again, The unit or *minimum* of cognition is such an amount of knowledge that if any constituent part of it be left out of account, the whole cognition of necessity disappears. But the objective *plus* the subjective constitutes such a unit or *minimum*: because

59840

PROP. III.

if the objective part be entirely removed from the object of our knowledge, and if the mind be left with no thing or thought before it, it can have no cognition—so if the subjective part, or itself, be entirely removed from the mind's observation, the cognition equally disappears, to whatever extent we may suppose the mere objective part of the presentation to be still before us. All cognisance of it is impossible by Proposition I. Therefore the objective and the subjective do together constitute the unit or *minimum* of cognition.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

Reasons for giving this proposition a prominent place in the system.

1. Although this proposition is rather a corollary of the second than a new and distinct proposition, still there are good reasons for assigning to it a formal and prominent position in the system. Its enunciation affords us an opportunity of explaining what is meant by inseparability in cognition, and by the unit or *minimum* of knowledge—two important but ill-understood points in philosophy. And further, it is to be suspected that, notwithstanding the clearness and certainty of Proposition II., doubts may still be entertained as to the inviolable unity in cognition of the objective and the subjective parts of our knowledge. Moreover, it may be doubted whether the popular delusion, which is largely shared in by psychology—namely, that subject and object

are two units, and not merely one unit or *minimum* of cognition—is combated and exploded in our second proposition in terms sufficiently express. On these accounts it has appeared advisable to give to Proposition III. a distinct and leading place in the system. PROP. III.

2. Two things are properly said to be separable from each other in cognition, when they can be separated in such a way that the one of them can be known or apprehended without the other. Thus a tree and a stone are separable from each other in cognition, because a tree can be apprehended without a stone being apprehended, and conversely. But when two things cannot be separated in such a way that the one of them can be apprehended without the other, but only in such a way that the one is never confounded with the other—these two things cannot with any propriety be said to be separable, but only to be distinguishable in cognition. This is the predicament in which subject and object, self and surrounding things, are placed. The two can at all times be intelligently distinguished from each other. They cannot at any time be intelligently separated from each other. They are clearly distinguishable; they are absolutely inseparable in cognition. What is meant by separability and inseparability in cognition.

3. Both this and the second proposition affirm that self or the subject is an integral and essential

PROP. III.

part of every object of cognition. But the reader is requested to bear in mind that this does not mean that he is a part *of that part* of the objects of his cognition, which he calls chairs, and tables, and trees. It means quite the contrary. It means that he is not, and cannot be, a part of that part. The table before you, good reader, is only a part of the object of your cognition. You yourself are the other part. The true and total object of your mind is the table, or whatever else it may be,—*and yourself.* The latter part, therefore, cannot by any possibility be a part of the former part; for to suppose that it can, would be equivalent to holding that a thing, instead of being what it was, was something which it was not. The two factors of cognition—the two constituents of every known object (to wit, the ego and the non-ego), are for ever contradistinguished—for ever sundered by a fatal law which holds them everlastingly apart, and prevents either of them from being its opposite. But it is precisely this inexorable severance which also keeps them together as inseparably united in cognition.

A possible misapprehension obviated.

4. Inseparability in cognition does not mean inseparability in space. The necessary laws of knowledge admit of our apprehending things as separable, and as separate, in space from ourselves to any extent we please; but they do not admit of our apprehending things as separate or as separable

Inseparability in cognition not to be confounded with inseparability in space: the external and the internal.

in cognition from ourselves in any sense whatever. It is to be suspected that some misconception on this point has been pretty general among the cultivators of philosophy, and that some who may have had a glimpse of the truth have shrunk from advocating, and even from contemplating, the inseparability in cognition of subject and object, from confounding this idea with the idea of their inseparability in space. Subject and object may be separated from each other in space more widely than the poles; it is only in cognition that they are absolutely inseparable. They may very well be separated in space; but space itself cannot be separated in cognition from the subject—space is always known and thought of as *my* cognisance of space—therefore a separation in space has no effect whatever in bringing about a separation in cognition, of object from subject. The cultivators of philosophy just referred to seem to have been apprehensive lest, in denying the separability in cognition of subject and object, they might appear to be calling in question the existence of *external* things, and thereby falling into idealism. As if any genuine idealism ever denied the existence of external things, —ever denied that these things were actually and *bonâ fide* external to us. Idealism never denied this: it only asks what is the meaning of "external" considered out of all relation to "internal," and it shows that, out of this relation, the word "external" has, and can have, no meaning.

PROP. III.

PROP. III.

The unit of cognition explained. How it is determined.

5. The unit or *minimum* of cognition is such an amount (and no more) of cognition as can be known. The knowable must mount up to a certain point before it can become the knowable least. In this respect the magnitude of the knowable is quite different from visible or ponderable magnitude. The visible or ponderable least cannot be determined absolutely, because there is no necessary law of reason fixing it. It is a varying quantity contingent on the capacities of the seer or the weigher. But the knowable least is determined absolutely by an essential law of all intelligence; it cannot be less than some thing or thought, with the addition of oneself. It cannot be less than object + subject; because anything less than this is absolutely unknowable by a necessary law of reason. No necessary law of knowledge fixes that the capacity of seeing or hearing or weighing shall not go below a certain limit: because with finer organs or with finer instruments a new *minimum* of sight or of sound or of weight might, for ever and ever, be revealed. But the capacity of knowing is sternly and everlastingly, and universally prohibited from going below a certain limit: it cannot descend to the apprehension of less than object + subject. This, therefore, is the least, the ultimate that can be known *by itself*. Object (whatever the object may be, for this of course is not fixed by any necessary law of reason) *plus* subject is the *minimum scibile per se*.

PROP. III.

Importance of the words "by itself," or *per se*.

6. It is of importance to attend to the words *by itself*, or *per se*. Object *plus* subject is not the knowable least or *minimum scibile* without any qualification, because the objective part of knowledge, which is, of course, less than both the objective and subjective parts, can undoubtedly be known; and the subjective part of knowledge (the ego), which is, of course, less than both the objective and subjective parts, can also be known. But object *plus* subject is the least that can be known *by itself* or *per se*, or in an isolated state; because the objective cannot be known without the subjective, or the subjective without the objective. Hence object *plus* subject is the *minimum scibile per se*. Suppose, for the sake of illustration, that a grain was the ponderable least. To remove all ambiguity, it would be necessary to add "by itself." Because the half-grain would also be ponderable—it would be ponderable along with the other half. But (on the supposition) it would not be ponderable *by itself*. Therefore, to avoid all misconstruction, we should require to say that the grain was the ponderable least "by itself." So in regard to the unit or *minimum* of cognition.

The unit of cognition further explained.

7. It matters not how many elements or factors the unit or *minimum* of cognition may consist of: it matters not how clearly we may be able to distinguish these elements from each other when the whole unit or minimum is before us. These circum-

PROP. III.

stances do not make the unit of cognition more than a unit or *minimum*. However numerous its elements may be, the unit is still a mere unit, if the whole of them are required to make up *one* datum of knowledge. The only circumstance which could prove the unit of cognition, consisting of the two factors subject and object, to be more than a unit, would be the entire removal of either of its factors, and the continuance of the other factor by itself as a unit or *minimum* of cognition. But such a removal and such a continuance have been seen to be impossible. Therefore, subject and object, though capable of being discriminated as the two elements of our knowledge, are, in their duality, still a single unit of cognition: because the one of them cannot be removed from any datum of knowledge without extinguishing the datum altogether.

No essential but only an accidental difference between the *minimum* and the *maximum* of cognition.

8. The *minimum scibile per se*, consisting of subject and object, is only accidentally but not essentially enlarged by augmenting the objective factor. Popularly considered, the universe *plus* me is greater than a grain of sand *plus* me. But this difference is altogether trivial, and of no account in philosophy. Let Y represent the subject, and X the object. So soon as Y apprehends Y + X the whole business of knowing is accomplished. The unit of knowledge, the *minimum scibile per se*, is constituted and compassed. We may add to this X as many other

X's as we please. But that makes no difference in the eyes of reason. A million X's *plus* Y is only accidentally but not essentially more than the *minimum scibile per se*. Although in the ordinary intercourse of life it may be convenient to regard the *minimum* and the *maximum* of cognition as diverse, yet, speculatively considered, they are coincident. PROP. III. 4

9. *Third counter-proposition.*—"The objective and the subjective parts of knowledge are separable in cognition. The ego and that which is presented to it as not itself, or as the *non-ego*, are each of them a unit of cognition. Object and subject, oneself and the thing with which one is engaged, are not one unit or *minimum*, but are two units or *minima* of knowledge." Third counter-proposition.

10. That this counter-proposition embodies the inadvertency of popular thinking with regard to the constitution of knowledge is undoubted. Every man in his ordinary moments conceives that he can and does separate in cognition the thing which he knows from himself the knower of it. He looks upon it as something which he can and does apprehend without apprehending himself. Hence he sees no difficulty whatever in separating it intelligently from himself. Hence, too, he fancies that *it* is a unit of knowledge, and that *he* is another unit of knowledge. This supposition, which contradicts the necessary laws of all It embodies an inadvertency of natural thinking.

PROP. III.

reason, is no worse than an inadvertency on the part of common opinion, although it is one of the most inveterate of those natural oversights which metaphysic exists for the sole purpose of correcting.

The psychological position more false and ambiguous than the natural inadvertency.

11. As usual, the psychological teaching on this head is more ambiguous and more erroneous than the popular inadvertency. It certainly does not embrace Proposition III., and in so far as it dissents from the counter-proposition, it dissents only to fall into a deeper error. It sometimes embraces a middle alternative, in which the contradiction already involved in the third counter-proposition is complicated with an additional contradiction: something to this effect — object and subject, though inseparable in *cognition*, are nevertheless two separate units or *minima* of cognition, and not merely one! It is quite unnecessary to argue against this proposition, so portentous is the twofold contradiction it involves. But it may be worth while to point out its origin.

The psychological error accounted for.

12. The psychologist finds himself in a dilemma. He sees that if he expressly denies the inseparability in cognition of the objective and the subjective elements of knowledge, he mistakes and misstates the laws of cognition; and he sees that if he admits that object and subject form the unit or *minimum* of cognition, he deprives himself of the best or only argu-

ment by which he may prove that each of them is a separate unit of *existence*. This consideration shocks him; and he endeavours to salve the point by admitting that subject and object are inseparable in cognition (this saves the phenomena in so far as the laws of knowledge are concerned), and by denying that they constitute only a single unit of cognition (this enables him to keep in his hands a valid argument for their duality of existence). But he retains it at a considerable expense—by swallowing a contradiction of his own brewing, which no palliatives will ever enable him, or any one else, to digest. Such, we may be assured, is the secret history of the psychological deliverance on this point. The psychologist has not the firmness to stand to the truth, be the consequences what they may. PROP. III.

13. The common division of the sciences into the two leading categories,—the science of mind and the science of matter,—when regarded as more than a mere verbal, and to a certain extent convenient distinction, is founded on the fallacy contained in this psychological deliverance, and partakes of its fallaciousness. Indeed, to lay down the dualism of subject and object as complete and absolute, (that is, as an out-and-out duality which is not also a unity), which pyschology not unfrequently does, is to extinguish every glimmering of the scientific rea- Distinction of science of mind and science of matter characterised.

PROP. III.

son; for this implies that the dualism is laid down in cognition, as complete and absolute, which it can only be when intelligence can act in opposition to its own necessary and insuperable laws.

Invalidity of counter-proposition III. Its origin, §§ 14, 15, 16.

14. It comes very much to the same thing whether the ordinary psychological deliverance be identical with the opinion we have been considering, or with the less illogical doctrine set forth in the third counter-proposition. The invalidity of the latter has been already sufficiently exposed. It cannot possibly be established, except upon the overthrow of Proposition I. A few remarks may be offered, not in refutation but in explanation of the origin of the third counter-proposition.

Many things are distinguishable, which are not separable, in cognition.

15. The circumstance that the object and subject of knowledge, the thing and the *me*, can be distinguished in cognition, seems to have led to the mistake embodied in this counter-proposition. People seem to have supposed that because these were distinguishable, they were also separable in the mind. They, perhaps, fancy that the assertion that the ego and non-ego are inseparable in cognition, is equivalent to the assertion that thought confounds and identifies them with each other. Such a supposition, if ever entertained, indicates merely a confusion of ideas. Many things are distinguishable in cognition, which it is yet impossible to know in

separation from each other; and many things are inseparable in cognition, which it is yet impossible to confound or identify with each other. A stick has two ends. Its one end is quite distinguishable in cognition from the other end; but it is absolutely inseparable in cognition from the other end. A stick with only one end is altogether incogitable. Again,—a stick has two ends. These are absolutely inseparable in cognition. But the one end is not the same as the other end. It is impossible for the mind to separate them; it is equally impossible for the mind to confound them. Of course, any given end of a stick can be cut away; but not in such a manner as to leave it with only one end, either for itself or for cognition. The end removed always is, and must be, replaced by a new end. PROP. III.

16. So in regard to subject and object. Any given subject may be removed from any given object, and any given object may be removed from any given subject. But the necessary law of every apprehended object is, that an ego or subject must be apprehended along with it; and the necessary law of every apprehended subject is, that an object or thought, of one kind or other, must be apprehended along with it. This is what the law of all intelligence necessitates; in other words, both subject and object are required to make up the unit or *minimum* of cognition. The object, by itself, is less Illustrations applied to subject and object.

PROP. III.

than this unit or *minimum*, and the subject, by itself, is less than this unit or *minimum*; and, therefore, each of them, by itself, is absolutely inapprehensible. Yet no one is ever so insane as to confound the objective part of his knowledge with the subjective part of it, or to mistake a thing for himself.

Further illustration.

17. The circumference of a circle and its centre is another example of two elements of cognition, which, though perfectly distinguishable, are altogether inseparable in the mind. The circumference of a circle cannot be known without the centre being known, and the centre of a circle cannot be known without the circumference being known; yet who ever supposes that the circumference *is* the centre, or the centre the circumference? In the same way, why should our proposition lead people to infer that that part of the total object of knowledge which is called the subject *is* that other part of it which is usually called the object, or that that part of it which is usually called the object *is* that other part of it which is called subject? One would think that the distinction might be understood and kept clearly in view without running even into the smallest degree of confusion. At any rate, these remarks, taken along with the explanation given in the third paragraph of this article, may be sufficient to obviate the main misconceptions which have prevented our third proposition from occupying its rightful place in specu-

lative science, and have led generally to the adoption of the third counter-proposition. PROP. III.

18. All that this proposition contends for may be expressed very shortly and simply by saying—that it is impossible for a man to consider any of the objects of his consciousness, whatever these may be, as at any time the objects of *no* consciousness— Short statement of what this proposition contends for.

> "Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
> Testa diu."

Everything which I, or any intelligence, can apprehend, is steeped primordially in *me;* and it ever retains, and ever must retain, the flavour of that original impregnation. Whether the object be what we call a thing or what we call a thought, it is equally impossible for any effort of thinking to grasp it as an intelligible thing or as an intelligible thought, when placed out of all connection with the ego. This is a necessary truth of all reason—an inviolable law of all knowledge—and we must just take it as we find it.

19. It is to be observed that under this article no opinion is expressed as to whether the subject and object of knowledge are two separate units *of existence.* All that is at present affirmed is, that they are not two units, but only one unit, *of cognition.* To offer any opinion on the subject of Being, in that department of our science which treats merely of No opinion offered as to *existence.*

PROP. III. Knowing, would be as irrelevant as to start an anatomical doctrine when expounding the principles of astronomy. Let us find out what we can know, and cannot know, before we talk of what is, or is not. In the two next propositions, the absolutely unknowable is more particularly condescended upon.

PROPOSITION IV.

MATTER PER SE.

Matter *per se*, the whole material universe by itself, is of necessity absolutely unknowable.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE whole material universe by itself, or *per se*, is a mere collection of objects without a subject or self. But it was proved in Proposition II. that the only objects which can possibly be known are objects *plus* a subject or self. Therefore the whole material universe by itself, or *per se*, is of necessity absolutely unknowable.

Again. Object *plus* a subject is the *minimum scibile per se* (by Proposition III.) But the whole material universe, *per se*, being a mere collection of objects without a subject, is less than the *minimum scibile per se*. Therefore the whole material universe being less than the *minimum scibile per se*—being less than the least that can be known by itself—is, of necessity, absolutely unknowable.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

PROP. IV.

1. At this stage light begins to break in upon the great controversy between idealism and materialism. This is the point at which the controversy branches off from the main stem of speculation. Idealism, rightly understood, is founded on this fourth proposition, which again is founded on our third or second, which again are firmly rooted in our first. Materialism—that is, the doctrine which advocates the absolute Being, the existence *per se* of matter—is founded on the following counter-proposition, which, it will be observed, rests upon the third or second counter-proposition, which again are supported by the first, and have no other stay when this ground is cut away from them.

Idealism and materialism have their roots here.

2. *Fourth counter-proposition.*—"The material universe *per se* is not of necessity absolutely unknowable. It may be, and it is, the object of our knowledge."

Fourth counter-proposition.

3. There can be no doubt that this counter-proposition expresses the natural opinion of all mankind respecting our knowledge of material things. In our ordinary moods we conceive that we know material things by themselves. When we gaze on rivers, woods, and mountains, or handle stocks and stones, we think that we are apprehending these things

It expresses common opinion as to our knowledge of matter *per se*.

only, and not them together with something else (to wit, ourselves), which we neither see nor hear, and on which we cannot lay our hands.

Oversight of self only apparent—not real and total.

4. In such cases the oversight which we commit is not real and total; it is only partial and apparent, and it is to be explained on the principles already expounded under Proposition I.,—the law of familiarity,—and the circumstance that the *me*, though always a part, is never a sensible part of the object of our knowledge. However strongly the natural judgments of mankind may run in favour of the fourth counter-proposition, it is utterly incompatible with the necessary dictates of reason, which declare that an intelligent soul can never know anything except an intelligent soul apprehending whatever it apprehends.

Psychological opinion as to our knowledge of matter *per se*.

5. Although here, as in the preceding instances, psychology speaks its opinion somewhat ambiguously and reservedly as to our knowledge of matter *per se*, still there can be little doubt that its doctrine to a large extent, and in so far as it presents a logical aspect, is virtually coincident with this fourth counter-proposition. Our ordinary pyschology advocates the existence of matter *per se*. And on what grounds? Surely on the grounds that we know it to exist *per se*. The knowledge of its independent existence would undoubtedly be sufficient evidence

PROP. IV.

of its independent existence. But failing this knowledge, it is difficult to understand on what grounds its existence *per se* can be advocated or established. Of course, its existence *per se* is, at the present stage of our discussion, neither admitted nor denied. But this much may be said, that it would be a monstrous fallacy—and one which we would very unwillingly charge our popular psychology with—to conclude that matter which was only known, and could only be known to exist *cum alio*, or not independently, *therefore* existed *per se*, or independently. That, assuredly, would be a *non-sequitur*. We must therefore hold that the teaching of psychology is, in its scope and tendency at least, identical with the fourth counter-proposition, which declares (in opposition to a strict demonstrated truth) that matter *per se* is, or can be, known.

Psychological materialism as founded on the four counter-propositions.

6. Observe, in further corroboration of what has been announced as the psychological doctrine, what a consistent scheme of materialism arises out of our four counter-propositions. *Firstly*, It is not necessary that we should know ourselves in order to know other things. *Secondly*, Any object, therefore, may be known by us, without ourselves being known along with it. *Thirdly*, Therefore the mere objective part of our knowledge is, or may be, a unit of cognition. *Fourthly*, Therefore matter *per se*, which is the mere objective part of our knowledge, is or

may be known by us. *Fifthly*, Therefore matter *per se* exists. The logic of that sorites which, we believe, contains the sole psychological argument in favour of the existence of matter *per se*, is impregnable. Unfortunately the starting-point and the three subsequent counter-propositions are false and contradictory, and are therefore altogether incompetent to support the conclusion—however true that conclusion may be in itself.

Fallacy of materialism. Possibility of idealism as founded on four propositions.

7. The fallacy of this argument will be still more apparent, and the grounds of idealism will be further opened up, if we set against it the first four propositions of the system. *Firstly*, It is necessary that self should always be known, if anything is to be known. *Secondly*, Therefore no object can be known without self being known. *Thirdly*, Therefore the mere objective part of knowledge is always less than the unit or *minimum* of cognition. *Fourthly*, Therefore matter *per se*, which is the mere objective part of our knowledge and less than the unit of cognition, cannot by any possibility be known by us. *Fifthly*, Therefore no argument in favour of the existence of matter *per se* can be deduced from our knowledge of matter *per se*—because we have, and can have, no such knowledge. Of course, no conclusion is deducible from these premises to the effect that matter *per se* does not exist. All that the premises do is to cut away the grounds of materialism, and

PROP. IV.

afford a presumption in favour of the possibility of some kind of idealism.

A preliminary question prejudged by materialist and by idealist.

8. Both the materialist and the idealist have tacitly prejudged an important preliminary question in their discussions respecting the existence of matter. The question is this—Is there, or is there not, any necessary and invincible law of knowledge and of reason which prevents matter *per se* from being known? The materialist, prejudging this question in the negative, silently decides that there is nothing in the nature of intelligence, or in the constitution and essence of knowledge, to prevent matter *per se* from being known. Holding, therefore, the knowledge of matter *per se* to be possible, and surrounded by the glories of a wonderful creation, he very naturally concludes that this knowledge is actual; and holding this knowledge to be actual, he cannot but conclude that matter *per se* exists. The inference from knowledge to existence is always legitimate. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should be bewildered and irritated by the speculations of those who have called in question the existence of matter *per se*. But the idealist also has his grounds of justification. He has silently decided this preliminary question in the affirmative. He has seen that in the very nature of reason, in the very constitution of knowledge, there is a necessary and insuperable law which renders any apprehension of matter

per se a contradiction and an impossibility. Hence his doubts, and even his denial, of the existence of matter *per se* are not altogether so unreasonable as they are liable to appear to those who are ignorant of the answer which he has tacitly and only half-consciously returned to the preliminary question referred to. PROP. IV.

9. This preliminary question has been prejudged—that is, has been settled in opposite ways without examination—by the materialist and by the idealist, owing to their having proceeded to ontology (the science of Being) before they had proposed and exhausted the problems of a rigorous and demonstrated epistemology (the science of Knowing). Owing to this reversal of the right method of philosophy, while the materialist has tacitly returned a wrong answer to this preliminary question, the idealist has obtained only a glimpse of the truth. The materialist rejects the law with an emphasis all the more strong, because the question which inquires about it can scarcely be said to have occurred to him. He never even dreams that there is an invincible law of reason which prevents all intelligence from knowing matter *per se*. He has silently decided in his own mind that there is no such law; and hence he has no difficulty in coming to a decision in favour of independent material existence. On the other hand, the idealist has certainly got

Cause of this precipitate judgment. Its evil consequences.

PROP. IV.

some perception of this law; but having passed on to the question of existence before he had thoroughly ascertained the laws of knowledge, and in particular before he had mastered the condition of all knowledge, as laid down in Proposition I., he has reached an ontological conclusion affirming the non-absolute existence of matter, which, however true it may be, is ambiguous, precipitate, and ill-matured,—and indeed not intelligible; for nothing which is ambiguous is intelligible.

How Prop. IV. decides this preliminary question. How Counter-prop. IV. decides it.

10. It is obvious that this system decides this preliminary question in the affirmative, declaring unequivocally that there is a necessary law which prevents all intelligence from knowing matter *per se*,—just as the counter-proposition decides it in the negative, declaring that there is none. The affirmative answer follows by a very short remove from Proposition I., in which the primary condition of all knowing is fixed. The negative answer is based on a denial of Proposition I.,—in other words, on the rejection of a necessary truth of reason.

Symbols illustrative of the position maintained by the Institutes.

11. A few more explanations may be offered. Attention to the following symbols will enable the reader to understand exactly the position advocated by these Institutes in regard to our knowledge of material things, as contrasted with the position occupied by ordinary thinking, and also maintained by

psychology. Let X represent the material universe, and let Y represent self or the subject: the law is that Y can apprehend X only provided, and when, it apprehends Y as well. (It shall be proved farther on that Y can conceive or think of X only provided, and when, it conceives Y as well; meanwhile this is assumed.) So that what Y apprehends, or thinks of, is never X *per se*, but always is, and must be, X *plus* Y. The synthesis of X and Y—that is, the only universe which the laws of knowledge permit Y (*i. e.* any intelligence) to know or conceive—this is the thesis maintained in these Institutes. PROP. IV.

12. Let this position be now contrasted with the ordinary and psychological opinion. Let X, as before, represent the material universe, and let Y represent self or the subject; the law is that Y can apprehend X only provided, and when, it is present to X. Here nothing is said about the necessity of Y apprehending Y, or itself, whenever it apprehends X; but all that is held to be necessary is that Y should *be present* to X whenever it apprehends X. But these two positions are entirely different, and lead to directly opposite conclusions; because if all that is required to enable Y to apprehend X be that Y should *be present* to X, there is nothing to prevent Y from being cognisant of X *per se:* indeed, in that case, it must be cognisant of X *per se;* because, not being cognisant of Y, or itself, it must be The same symbols as illustrative of the psychological position.

PROP. IV.

cognisant of X without Y; but X without Y is X *per se*. So that the psychological position, which contends merely for the presence of Y along with X as the condition on which Y may know X, but not for the cognisance by Y of its own presence along with X, leaves the knowledge of X *per se* not only possible, but necessary. On this basis, which is occupied by ordinary thinking as well as by psychological science, our knowledge of matter *per se* may very well be vindicated.

Different conclusions from the two positions.

13. A very different conclusion flows from the initial principle on which this work is founded. Our position is not simply that Y must be present to X in order to be cognisant of X: nothing can come of such a truism as that; it is barren as a cinder. Our position is that Y must, moreover, be cognisant of Y or itself, in order to be cognisant of X, and that Y can apprehend X *only* when it also apprehends Y. That seed bears fruit, which, whether acceptable or not, is at any rate legitimately raised, because it leads at once to the conclusion that all knowledge of X *per se*—that is, of X without any Y being known along with it—is altogether impossible.

Difference farther explained.

14. Lest it should be supposed that this conclusion is also deducible from the other position, a few words may be added to show that this is not the case. Suppose we merely affirm, with psychology, that Y

must always *be* along with X in order that X may be apprehended; there would be nothing in that position to prevent X *per se* from being apprehended —nothing which supports the conclusion that all knowledge of X *per se* is impossible; the only inference (which, however, would be a mere re-statement of the position) would be that wherever X was known there must always be a Y present to know it. That is undoubted; but this inference is very far from being equivalent to the conclusion that X *per se* cannot be known. X *per se can* be known, if Y can know it without being cognisant of itself at the same time; for to say that X *per se* is known, simply means that X is known without Y being known along with it. But the conclusion that X *per se* cannot be known, is irresistible on the other premises, because if Y must not only *be* along with X in order to know X, but mut also *be known* along with X in order to know X, it is obviously impossible that X *per se* can be known, or that Y can know X without knowing Y—*i.e.*, itself—at the same time. PROP. IV.

15. Another point of essential difference between the views maintained in this system and the ordinary psychological opinions is this: It is possible that psychology may assent to the position that Y (to continue these symbols) cannot know X without knowing Y, or itself, as well. It is indeed by no means Another point of difference between this system and psychology.

PROP. IV.

certain that psychology distinctly disavows this principle (so vacillating is her procedure), although it is quite inconsistent with the general scope of her instructions, and with the conclusions at which she arrives. But supposing it to be conceded, psychology may still contend that this position does not prove X *per se* to be absolutely and universally unknowable. She may argue—indeed does argue—that although X *per se* (matter by itself) may not be known by *us* (the human Y), it may, nevertheless, be known by other intelligences, actual or possible; that is, by some Y differently constituted from us. Psychology thus attributes our incompetency to know matter *per se* to some peculiarity or special limitation in our faculties of cognition. Not to speak of lesser men, even Kant has fallen into this mistake. But a very moderate degree of reflection might have convinced them that we are prevented from knowing matter *per se* by no such cause. The imperfection or limitation of our faculties can only prevent us from knowing how, or under what modes of apprehension different from ours, matter may be known by other intelligences, supposing such to exist. Matter *per se* is unknowable by us on a very different account. It is unknowable, not on account of any special disability under which we may be supposed to labour (and surely we have a sufficiency of imperfections without increasing their number through a miscalculation), but in virtue of a law binding upon all

intelligence. The law is that *all* intelligence (every Y, actual or possible) *must* know itself along with whatever it is cognisant of, (Prop. I.) Therefore matter *per se* cannot possibly be known by any intelligence, be its constitution what it may; for every intelligence in knowing matter must know itself as well. X *per se* is thus fixed as absolutely unknowable *all round*,—all round the circle of intelligence; and here, at least, *we* lie under no special disadvantage, if disadvantage it be. "Know me," says X *per se* to one Y.—"I cannot," says that Y, "for I must know myself as well." "Know me," says X *per se* to another and differently constituted Y.—"I cannot," says this other Y, "for I must know myself as well." "Know me," says X *per se* to a third and again differently constituted Y.—"I cannot do it," says this third Y, "for I am under the necessity of knowing myself along with you:" and so on, round the whole circle. Thus X *per se* meets with a rebuff from every quarter—cannot get known on any terms by any intelligence. Independent matter is thus shut out from all cognition by a necessary law of all reason. The primary condition of all knowledge closes the door in its face. So much for the psychological averment that matter *per se* may be known by other intelligences, though perhaps not known by us. Psychology professes to deal not with necessary, but only with contingent, truth—and the mischievous error now under consideration (for error

PROP. IV.

it is, inasmuch as it attributes our incompetency to a wrong cause,—and how mischievous it is will afterwards appear in the agnoiology) is the offspring of that timidity. These Institutes deal only with necessary truth; and one of the advantages of this restriction is, that while it saves us from the mistake alluded to, it enables us to prove, as an easy and legitimate deduction from their first principle, that all cognisance of the material universe *per se* is not only impossible to us, but that it is universally impossible. This conclusion, which here is only in the bud, shows blossom in the agnoiology, and bears fruit in the ontology.

Matter *per se* reduced to the contradictory.

16. By these considerations matter *per se* is reduced to the predicament of a contradiction: it is not the simply inconceivable by us, but the absolutely inconceivable in itself. This reduction, the importance of which will be apparent by-and-by, could not have been effected upon any principle of psychological strategy. It is a manœuvre competent only to the dialectic of necessary truth. "Matter *per se*," says psychology, "may not be known by us, but what of that? If it can be possibly known by any intelligence, it is not to be laid down as the contradictory." True, *if* it can be known by any intelligence. But what if it can *not* be known by any intelligence, actual or possible? In that case it undoubtedly becomes the contradictory. For what is a contradiction but that which cannot be known

PROP. IV.

or conceived on any terms by any possible intelligence? Whatever is of this character is a contradictory thing. Why is a two-sided triangle a contradiction? Just because the laws of all thinking prevent such a figure from being known or conceived. Why is matter *per se* a contradiction? For precisely the same reason. The laws of all thinking intercept it on the way to cognition, and compel something else to be known in its place; to wit, matter *cum alio*, i. e. *mecum*. That the one of these contradictions should appear more palpable than the other, is a mere accident of words. Matter *per se* is thus cut off from all means of escape from the category of the contradictory, inasmuch as a loophole is to be found only in the supposition that, if one kind of intelligence cannot be cognisant of it, another kind may. Psychology endeavours to open that outlet: our first proposition shuts it; so that matter *per se* must just submit to the doom which consigns it to the limbo of the contradictory.

This contradiction attaches not only to our knowledge of matter *per se*,

17. Perhaps it may be thought that the contradiction here spoken of does not attach to matter *per se*, but only to our *knowledge* of it; and that it amounts to no more than this, that things cannot be known unless they are presented in some way or other to an intelligent mind. A few remarks, therefore, must be made to obviate this natural but very serious misunderstanding, and to show that the contradic-

PROP. IV.

tion in question affects not merely knowledge, but its objects. To speak first of merely contradictory knowledge: Suppose it to be laid down as a necessary truth of reason, that a man can be cognisant of things only when they are present, either really or ideally, to his consciousness; that position would merely fix all knowledge as contradictory in which the things to be known were not presented to the mind. It would leave the things themselves unaffected. *They* would not be contradictory; they would still be possible, though not actual, objects of knowledge. Matter *per se* (supposing it cognisable) would not be itself contradictory, because the cognisance of it, except upon certain conditions, was contradictory. It would be rather hard upon matter *per se* to visit it with the consequences of our refusal to comply with the conditions of cognition, or to suppose that *it* was an absurdity, because *we* happened to be asleep, or occupied with something else. Here, then, the contradiction attaches only to the *knowledge* of matter *per se*. That is absurd and impossible, unless the conditions requisite to its attainment are complied with. The thing itself is untouched; it remains unknown, but not unknowable.

18. But the case is very different in regard to the contradiction at present under consideration. These Institutes differ entirely from psychology in their

doctrine as to the primary condition of all knowledge. They contend, not simply that a man can know things only when they are presented to his mind, but that he can know them only when *he himself* is presented to his mind along with them. This position, in fixing the knowledge of self as the condition of all knowledge, fixes self, moreover, as an integral and essential *part* of every object of cognition (see remark, pp. 103, 104). When that integral part, therefore, is supposed to be withdrawn, as it is in the case of matter *per se*, the inevitable effect is, that the remaining part of the object of cognition—to wit, matter *per se*—lapses into a contradiction. It becomes a mere absurdity. It is not simply unknown, it is absolutely unknowable; because, upon the terms of this system, the only object knowable by any mind is an object made up of a known thing and a known mind or self. Here, then, the contradiction besieges not merely the knowledge of the thing, but the thing itself. The difference between the two contradictions may be illustrated in this way. The cognisance of a circle is contradictory, unless that figure be presented, either really or ideally, to the mind. This contradiction, however, is limited exclusively to the cognisance; it does not extend to the circle. A mere contradiction of this kind would leave matter *per se* altogether unaffected. But the cognisance of a *centreless* circle is not only a contradictory cognisance; the *object* of it is, more-

PROP. IV.

But to matter *per se* itself.

PROP. IV.

over, a contradictory object. A centreless circle is absolutely incogitable in itself. The contradiction which attaches to matter *per se* is of this character. Matter *per se* is a contradictory thing, just as much as a circle without a centre is a contradictory thing. In the case of the centreless circle, the object is contradictory, because it lacks an element (to wit, the centre) which is essential to the constitution not only of every known, but of every knowable circle; and in like manner, matter *per se* is contradictory, because it wants the element (to wit, the me) which is essential to the constitution not only of every known, but of every knowable thing, (Prop. II.) It is thus certain that matter *per se*, considered as an object of cognition, is a contradictory thing, and that the contradiction (as these remarks have been introduced to show) cleaves not only to the cognition, but to its object. A thing which can be known or conceived only when something else is known or conceived along with it, must surely present a contradiction to the mind whenever an attempt is made to know or conceive it by itself.

ivantage of is reduc- n. New ht on the oblem of ilosophy.

19. This position being secured—the reduction, namely, of matter *per se* to a contradiction—the first triumph of philosophy is achieved. This operation turns the flank of every hostile scheme, and breaks down the most formidable impediment with which speculation has to struggle. Her course is

now comparatively smooth. One advantage of this reduction is that it brings before us, in a new light, (and the more lights it can be viewed in the better), the leading question of the epistemology. That problem is, What is the essential condition and constituent of all knowledge; or what is that which enters, and must enter, into the composition of every object of knowledge? But another form of the question might be, What is every object of knowledge without this essential constituent? And the answer is, that it must be the contradictory; because it is obvious that if the objects of knowledge be deprived of the necessary element which makes them objects of knowledge, the remaining part must be universally unknowable and inconceivable—in other words, contradictory. But the next question is, *What* is this incogitable remainder, this contradictory *caput mortuum?* For it is idle to talk of this contradictory element unless we are able to say what it is; and the answer is, that it is matter *per se*, or, carried to a higher generality, objects without any subject. This is the contradictory element in all knowledge—the contradiction which intellect has to overcome—the wastes and wilds of absurdity which are given over to the reclaiming processes of reason, and which have to be redeemed into cognition. PROP. IV.

20. The next question is, How is this redemption effected? How does the contradictory cease to be

PROP. IV.

Importance of finding the contradictory.

contradictory; how does the incogitable become cogitable; how does the absolutely unknowable become known? That was the form in which the problem of philosophy usually presented itself, although not very clearly, to the thinkers of antiquity. That was the form under which Plato viewed it, when he described philosophy as the means by which the human soul was converted from ignorance to knowledge. His description would have been more exact had he said that philosophy was not so much this conversion itself, as an explanation of the process by which the conversion was effected—in other words, was explanatory of the way in which the contradictory element contained in any object of cognition was overcome, not by philosophers only, but by all mankind,—the only difference being that the philosopher overcame the contradiction, and knew the process how, while the common man equally overcame it, without being conscious of the means which he employed. But whatever the explanation may be—whether by calling attention, as Plato did, to his "ideas," or, as this system does, to the "me," as the redeeming element—it is obvious that the question as to the conversion of the contradictory cannot be distinctly answered until we have *found* our contradictory, our incogitable, our unknowable. Until that is done, we can have nothing definite to work upon. Hence the importance of reducing matter *per se* to a contradiction. This reduction is

equivalent to a *finding* of the contradictory; and we have now something under our hands. We can now exhibit the process of conversion by which the unintelligible is translated into the intelligible. This exhibition is indeed the business of every part of the first section of this work. But the explanation could scarcely have proceeded, had the unintelligible or contradictory element of all cognition remained unfound. PROP. IV.

21. In speaking thus of the finding of the contradictory, we are very far from insinuating that the contradictory can be known or conceived. It can be conceived only as the absolutely inconceivable. To find it as this is all that is necessary for the purposes of rational truth. In one sense, and when properly explained, nothing is easier than to conceive the contradictory. Conceive the one end of a stick absolutely removed, and the other end *alone* remaining, and you have a conception of something contradictory. "I cannot conceive that," the reader will say. True, in one sense you cannot conceive it, but in another sense you can conceive it distinctly,—you can conceive it as that which neither you nor any other intelligence can conceive. This is the whole amount of the conceivability which is claimed for matter *per se*. It is to be conceived only as that which no intellect can conceive, inasmuch as all intellect, by its very nature as intellect, can conceive it only *cum alio*. In what sense the contradictory is conceivable.

PROP. IV.

Matter *per se* is not a nonentity.

22. Does this contradictory nondescript *exist?* The answer to that question had better be allowed to ripen a little longer. Philosophers, ere now, have got into trouble by plucking it prematurely. One point the reader may make himself quite easy about. This system is as far as any system can be from maintaining that matter *per se* is a nonentity—a blank. All blanks, all nonentities, require to be supplemented by a "me" before they can be cogitable, just as much as all things or entities require to be thus supplemented. But matter *per se* is, by its very terms, that which is unsupplemented by any "me;" therefore it, certainly, is not to be conceived as a nonentity. If idealism be a system which holds that matter *per se* is *nothing*, we forswear and denounce idealism. *True* idealism, however, never maintained any such absurd thesis. But does not true idealism reduce every *thing* in the universe to mere phenomena of consciousness? Suppose it does,—does it not also reduce every *nothing* in the universe to mere phenomena of consciousness? The materialist supposes that according to idealism, when a loaf of bread ceases to be a phenomenon of consciousness, and is locked away in a dark closet, it must turn into nothing. He might as well fancy that, according to idealism, it must turn into cheese. Idealism does not hold that when a thing ceases altogether to be a phenomenon of consciousness, it becomes *another* phenomenon of consciousness, as this supposition would imply. No

—in the absence of all consciousness, the loaf, or whatever it may be, lapses, not into nothing, but into the contradictory. It becomes the absolutely incogitable—a surd—from which condition it can be redeemed only when some consciousness of it is either known or conceived. But the question is,—Is our reason competent to conceive the abstraction of all consciousness from this, or from any other, object in the universe? This competency may very well be doubted: perhaps hereafter good grounds may appear for denying it.

PROP. IV.

PROPOSITION V.

MATTER AND ITS QUALITIES PER SE.

All the qualities of matter *by themselves* are, of necessity, absolutely unknowable.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE qualities of matter by themselves are, equally with matter itself, an objective presentment without a subject. But it has been proved by Proposition II. that no objective can be known without a subjective or self being known along with it. Therefore, all the qualities of matter, by themselves, are absolutely unknowable.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

Why Proposition V. is introduced.

1. In dealing with the question respecting our knowledge of material existence, psychology vacillates between two opinions. At times it sides with natural thinking, and affirms, in the terms set forth

in Counter-proposition IV., that matter *per se* is known; and at other times it advocates a doctrine for which natural thinking is certainly in no way responsible—the opinion, namely, that we are cognisant only of the material qualities *per se*. The first of these opinions is set at rest by Proposition IV., which proves that a contradiction is involved in the supposition that material things, by and in themselves, or without a mind being known along with them, can be known by any intelligence. The proposition now before us is introduced chiefly for the purpose of meeting and correcting the second of these opinions, to which a distinct expression is given in the following counter-proposition. It will be at once obvious that this counter-proposition involves a contradiction just as much as counter-proposition IV. does; because it asserts that certain qualities of matter can be known without the "me" being known along with them. But it has been thought necessary to bring forward this doctrine, and to controvert it expressly, because it is one which is generally considered as placed beyond the reach of controversy by means of a psychological distinction of some celebrity, the value of which shall now be critically tested. PROP. V.

2. *Fifth Counter-proposition.*—"Although matter *per se* is not known, certain of its qualities are knowable, and are known *per se*, or by themselves." Fifth counter-proposition.

PROP. V.

Distinction between the primary and the secondary qualities of matter.

3. The qualities here referred to are those which our psychologists call the *primary* qualities of matter. It is here, then, that the distinction between the primary and secondary qualities comes under review. This distinction has played a conspicuous, though neither a very edifying nor a very successful part in philosophy. It is of some importance, however, in a historical point of view, as forming a chapter in the controversy between idealism and materialism; and therefore a short account of it shall now be given—if for no other purpose than that of showing how completely it has failed to answer its purpose, and how much it tends to keep up mistaken and contradictory notions in regard to the laws of knowledge.

Character of the secondary qualities.

4. It is not necessary to present a complete enumeration of the primary and secondary qualities, or to go into any detailed explanation of their nature. A general view of the respective characters of the two classes will be sufficient to enable the reader to understand the distinction, and the use to which it has been turned by psychology. Among the secondary qualities are classed heat and cold, colour and sound, taste and odour. It will be observed that these words are of ambiguous or twofold import. They signify both certain sensations in us, and certain inferred qualities in things by which these sensations are induced. Thus the words

"heat" and "colour" express the subjective affections which we call by these names; and they also express certain occult material causes which are supposed to excite them. When we speak of heat in our hand, we mean something very different from what we mean when we talk of heat in the fire. In the one case we mean a sensation; in the other case we mean some inferred property in the fire which occasions that sensation. And so in regard to the other secondary qualities. The words which express them are generally ambiguous, and it is only from the context, or from the relation in which they are spoken, that we are able to determine in which of the two senses (objective or subjective) the terms are employed. In this respect the secondary qualities are said to differ from the primary. But the important circumstance, in the estimation of psychology, and to which our attention is directed in considering this distinction, is, that we have no distinct and assured knowledge of the secondary qualities as they are in themselves, inasmuch as they must be, in their own nature, very different from the sensations to which they gave rise. The sensations are all that we are cognisant of: and thus our knowledge of material things, and even the evidence of their existence, would be extremely imperfect, doubtful, and confused, had we no other sources of information respecting them than the subjective affections which their occult qualities are supposed to induce, and no

PROP. V.

PROP. V.

other notion of them than the notion of their secondary qualities.

Character of the primary qualities.

5. The primary qualities are said to be of a different character, and to supply the information and the evidence which are wanted. These are principally extension, figure, and solidity. We are cognisant of these qualities, not as mere sensations in ourselves, like heat and cold, colour and sound, but as they exist and show themselves in external things. Heat and cold, colour and sound—in a word, all our sentient modifications—may be so increased in degree as to become unbearable. But our perceptions of the extension and figure and incompressibility of material objects cannot be thus augmented in intensity. By this circumstance our perceptions are distinguished from our sensations: the latter are susceptible of different degrees of vivacity; some amount of bodily pleasure or pain enters into their composition. Not so in the case of our perceptions. Their degree is always the same; they involve no organic pleasure, or the reverse. It is through our perceptions, and not through our sensations, that we are made acquainted with the primary qualities of matter—that is, with the extension, the figure, and the solidity of external objects. It is further alleged that the terms which indicate the primary qualities are not ambiguous, but have only one signification. But the important circumstance to which psychology

refers us in its exposition of the primary qualities, is this, that we have a distinct and direct knowledge of them as they exist, not in our minds, but in the things which are made known to us through their means. We have a clear apprehension of the objective presence of extension, figure, and solidity, as the properties of external things. In this respect the primary differ from the secondary qualities, of whose objective existence we have no distinct knowledge or conception. PROP. V.

Such is the psychological distinction between the primary and the secondary qualities of matter, and between sensation and perception. Sensation is the faculty which doubtfully and obscurely indicates the objective existence of the secondary qualities; while perception is the faculty which announces clearly and unmistakably the objective existence of the primary. Sensation, it is said, reveals the sentient subject; perception the sensible and objective world.

6. In itself, and under certain limitations, this distinction is harmless. Although the analysis is of no importance, and answers no purpose, there is nothing positively erroneous in the affirmation that the primary qualities of matter are phenomena of a different order from the secondary; that the latter are obscure and sensational; that the former are clear and perceptible. Psychology might, indeed, Defects of this distinction.

PROP. V.

find it difficult to show that the words which express the primary qualities are one whit less ambiguous than those which denote the secondary. Are not the words "extension," "figure," and "solidity," employed both to express these qualities as they are in themselves, and also to express our *perceptions* of them? Is not this precisely the same ambiguity which the terms significant of the secondary qualities present? Is psychology able to explain, or is any human being competent to know what these qualities are, apart from his perceptions of them? It is always our perceptions of the primary qualities, and not these qualities themselves, which come before the mind, just as it is always our sensations resulting from the secondary qualities, and not the secondary qualities themselves, that we are cognisant of. The terms, therefore, which express the primary qualities, are just as ambiguous as those which indicate the secondary; and the attempt to remove this ambiguity, by means of the distinction in question, instead of removing, serves only to disguise it. The attempt to establish a clear doctrine of perceptive knowledge, by distinguishing the two classes of qualities, establishes only an obscure and misleading one.

7. But the error lies not so much in this distinction itself as in its application. In the hands of psychology it runs into a palpable contradiction—

into the contradiction to which expression is given in this fifth counter-proposition, which declares that certain qualities of matter can be known, without the *me* or subject being known along with them. How this contradiction comes about will be obvious from the following considerations. PROP. V. It runs into a contradiction.

8. This distinction has been employed by psychology in refutation of what it conceives to be idealism. Idealism, according to psychology, is founded on a refusal to recognise the primary qualities of matter as clearly distinguishable from the secondary. It is supposed to confound the two classes under a common category, or rather to reduce the primary qualities to the same character and condition as the secondary—to resolve extension, figure, and solidity, no less than heat, and colour, and sound, into mere modifications of the sentient subject. It is supposed to maintain that the primary qualities are just as obscure and occult as the secondary; that in dealing with the material universe we are cognisant, not of the qualities of external objects, but only of certain changes in our own sentient condition, and thus idealism is supposed to have succeeded either in abolishing or in rendering doubtful the absolute existence of material things;—because, if the primary qualities stand on precisely the same footing with the secondary; if we know nothing about either class as they are in themselves; and if the attempt Psychological conception of idealism.

PROP. V.

to reduce our whole knowledge of the material world to a mere series of sensations be successful, these sensations may possibly be excited by other causes, and accounted for on other grounds than the postulation of an independent universe; and therefore the existence of the latter becomes, at any rate, problematical. With the annihilation of the sentient subject, the material universe would disappear—would be reduced to a nonentity, because it consists of a mere series of sensations.

Such is the psychological conception of idealism. This system is supposed to aim at the extinction of material things, and to withdraw them from our cognition, by confounding or repudiating the distinction between the primary and secondary qualities. The psychologist conceives that idealism is founded on a false generalisation to this effect:—*some* of the qualities of matter, such as heat, sound, and colour, turn out, on examination, to be mere sensations in us, therefore the *whole* of the material qualities are susceptible of this resolution.

Psychological refutation of idealism.

9. Having thus detected what he conceives to be the fallacy involved in the idealist's argument, namely, the false generalisation on which it proceeds, in other words, the shuffling together of the primary and secondary qualities, the psychologist then addresses himself to its refutation, and to the restoration of the

material world to the independency of which it appeared to have been so unlawfully deprived. He brings into play the distinction which we have been considering. He admits that some of the qualities of matter are reducible to mere sensations; but he denies that the whole of them admit of this resolution. No, says he, there is extension, there is figure, there is solidity. These qualities are refractory. They will not submit to be classed along with those more tractable companions of theirs, heat, cold, colour, &c., as the mere sensations of man. They refuse to be resolved into mere modifications of the human mind; and the attempt so to resolve them is to confound together phenomena what are essentially different. They speak out plainly for themselves; they claim a manifest existence of their own. There is nothing occult about *them*. Unlike the secondary qualities, they declare their presence unequivocally. They stand forth and defy the idealist, with all his machinations, to explode them. Our sensations may perhaps not afford us any clear information in regard to the nature of material things, or even any sufficient evidence of their existence; but our perceptions of extension, figure, and solidity, place this truth in a clear light and on an indisputable footing; and, on the manifest existence of these qualities, we rest the establishment of the independent existence of matter.' PROP. V.

PROP. V.

This refutation, if logically conclusive, is founded on a contradiction, and therefore cannot be accepted.

10. There appears at first sight to be some force in that argument, but before it can be accepted as valid, one or two small circumstances must be taken into consideration. It is not enough to show that sensation is different from perception, and that the primary are different from the secondary qualities; the psychologist must moreover show, or, at least, must assume, that the primary qualities are known *per se*, or without the "me" being known along with them. Unless he assumes this his argument is good for nothing. His object is to prove that material things have an existence altogether independent of intelligence. Perhaps they have; but how can that conclusion be logically reached by merely affirming that extension, figure, and solidity are not of a sensational character, and that the primary qualities are different from the secondary? This doctrine must be coupled with the assertion, that the primary qualities *are known* in their independency, otherwise the conclusion that they *are* independent can have nothing to rest upon. The psychological argument, therefore, when stripped of its wrappings and presented in plain language, amounts to this:—certain qualities of matter, namely, the primary, *are known* to exist *per se*; therefore these qualities and the matter in which they inhere, *do* exist *per se*. But the premiss of that argument (we have nothing to do with the conclusion at present) is false and contradictory. It contradicts Proposition V., which is a

necessary and demonstrated truth of reason. It is not possible for any of the qualities of matter to be known *per se*, or without a "me" or subject being apprehended along with them. Therefore the psychological reasoning in support of the independent existence of matter rests on a foundation which falsifies the necessary laws of knowing; and thus it not only fails to answer the purpose for which it was designed, but it poisons the stream of philosophical truth in its very fountain-head. PROP. V.

11. So much, then, for the distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of matter, and the uses to which it has been applied. This distinction is one on which psychology usually lays much stress as leading to important consequences. It is, however, a distinction which answers no purpose. It holds out promises which it is unable to fulfil. It affords no refutation even of the spurious idealism which it assails. When viewed in its true colours, it is seen to falsify the laws of knowledge, and to mislead the footsteps of philosophy. It is, at best, a mere bubble on the sea of speculation; and it should now be allowed quietly to break and die. It has played its part as well as it could, and that was not very well. The distinction of the primary and secondary qualities should be abandoned as useless, or worse.

PROPOSITION VI.

THE UNIVERSAL AND THE PARTICULAR IN COGNITION.

Every cognition must contain an element common to all cognition, and an element (or elements) peculiar to itself: in other words, every cognition must have a part which is unchangeable, necessary, and universal (the same in all), and a part which is changeable, contingent, and particular (different in all); and there can be no knowledge of the unchangeable, necessary, and universal part, exclusive of the changeable, contingent, and particular part; or of the changeable, contingent, and particular part, exclusive of the unchangeable, necessary, and universal part: that is to say, neither of these parts by itself can constitute a cognition; but all knowledge is necessarily a synthesis of both factors.

DEMONSTRATION.

PROP. VI.

If every cognition did not contain an element common to all cognition, there could be no unity in cognitions; they could not be classed together. But they are classed together. They all rank as cognitions. Therefore every cognition must contain an element common to all cognition. Again, if every cognition did not contain an element (or elements) peculiar to itself, there could be no diversity in cognitions; they could not be distinct from each other. But they are distinct from each other. They rank not only as cognitions, but as *different* cognitions. Therefore every cognition must contain an element (or elements) peculiar to itself. And thus the constitution of every cognition involves an unchangeable, necessary, and universal part—a part which is the same in all,—and a changeable, contingent, and particular part—a part which is different in all; and there can be no knowledge of either of these parts by itself, or exclusive of the other part; but all knowledge is necessarily a synthesis of both factors.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. The words "unchangeable" (or permanent), "necessary" (or essential), "universal" (or common or general), as here employed, are nearly or altogether

Explanation of words.

PROP. VI.

synonymous. The unchangeable is that which cannot be changed in cognition, and is therefore equivalent to the necessary and universal. The necessary is that which cannot be dispensed with, or got rid of in cognition, and is therefore equivalent to the unchangeable and universal. The universal is that which is everywhere and always present in cognition, and is therefore equivalent to the unchangeable and necessary. In contrast to these terms stand the words "changeable" (or fluctuating), "contingent" (or accidental), "particular" (or peculiar). These, too, are mere varieties of the same expression. The changeable is that which can be changed in cognition, and is therefore equivalent to the contingent and particular. The contingent is that which may be otherwise in cognition, and is therefore equivalent to the changeable and particular. The particular is that which may be displaced in cognition, and replaced by some other particular, and is therefore equivalent to the changeable and contingent.

In what sense the contingent element is necessary, and in what sense it is contingent.

2. This proposition declares that every cognition must contain a particular and contingent, as well as a universal and necessary element. Hence it may be concluded that the contingent element is as necessary to the constitution of knowledge as the necessary element is. And so, in one sense, it is. No knowledge is possible except through a union of these two factors. Therefore, neither part can be

supposed to be wanting, without destroying the very conception of knowledge. But the explanation is this: although the contingent element cannot be abolished or left out, and is, therefore, in a certain sense necessary, it may nevertheless *be changed*. It is susceptible of infinite or indefinite variation. One particular (a tree, for instance) may be removed, but provided another particular (a house or something else) be placed before me, my knowledge continues to subsist. This element, then, is regarded as contingent, not because every form of it can be dispensed with—not because knowledge can take place without it, but solely because it can be varied. It is accidental, because it is fluctuating. A cognition cannot be formed without some peculiar feature entering into its composition; but a cognition can be formed without this, or that, or any peculiar feature that can be named, entering into its composition; for the varieties of the particular constituent are inexhaustible. If one form of it disappears, another comes in its place. The peculiar part of cognition may always be other than it is: if it could not, there would be an end to every *variety* of knowledge, and consequently to knowledge itself. A flower may be apprehended instead of a book—a sound instead of a colour; any one particular instead of any other. Hence this element is contingent throughout all its phases. On the other hand, the universal element is regarded as necessary, not

PROP. VI.

because it alone is essential to the constitution of knowledge, but because it is invariable. On this factor no changes can be rung. Being the common quality of all knowledge, it admits of no variation; being the same in all, it can have no substitute; being uniform, it has no phases. It can never be other than it is. If it could, it would no longer be the common quality. Our cognitions would lose their unity. They would cease to be cognitions, just as they would cease to be cognitions by the suppression of the peculiar element which imparts to them their diversity. Hence the common element is necessary with a double necessity. It can neither be abolished nor changed. The particular element is necessary only with a single necessity. It cannot be abolished: some peculiarity must attach to every cognition; but it can be changed; it is changed incessantly. Vicissitude is its very character; and therefore, in all its forms, it is contingent or accidental.

Why this proposition is introduced.

3. The truth of this proposition was tacitly assumed in the Introduction to this work, and is indeed presupposed by the very nature and terms of the inquiry. For when it is asked, What is the one element common to all knowledge—the constant feature present in every cognition?—(see Introduction, § 85, also foot-note p. 70,)—this question, of course, implies that there *is* such an element or fea-

ture, and also that our cognitions contain other constituents of a variable and particular character. But a formal enunciation and proof of the proposition have been brought forward, because, while it presents the only correct analysis of knowledge, and the only tenable doctrine on the subject of "the particular and the universal," it affords an opening for a few remarks on the history of that much-debated but still undecided topic. This proposition is the thesis of that controversy—the institute which settles it. The main purpose, however, which this proposition serves is, that it supplies the only premiss from which it is competent to prove that the mind cannot be known to be material—a point essential to ulterior proceedings, and which must be made good in order to support the concluding truth of the ontology.

PROP. VI.

4. Like every other question in philosophy, the discussion respecting "particulars and universals" was begun at the wrong end. This topic was made a question of Being before it had undergone probationary scrutiny and received settlement as a question of Knowing. The Greek philosophers, at a very early period, were impressed with the correct conviction that all science is the pursuit of the universal amid the particular, the permanent amid the fluctuating, the necessary amid the contingent, the One in the All. But they applied this right method to the consideration of a wrong object. Overlook-

Question concerning the particular and the universal instead of being made a question of Knowing.

PROP. VI.

ing, or paying but little heed to, the circumstance that all knowledge is made up of these two constituents, they leaped forward, without sufficient evidence, to the conclusion that all existence is composed in the same way—is a synthesis of the particular and the universal. They thus lost themselves, at the outset, in ontological rhapsodies and hypotheses. Instead of pausing to study the constitution of knowledge, as that which could alone afford a reasonable basis for any scheme of ontology—instead of searching out the element common to all knowledge, the necessary, as distinguished from the contingent, part of thinking—the factor which never varies amid all the fluctuations of cognition—the one known in all known—they proceeded at once to the investigation of Being, and went in quest of the element common to all existence—the factor which never varies amid all the fluctuations of the natural universe—the necessary, as distinguished from the contingent, part of things—the one Being in all being; and, in consequence of this inverted procedure, their researches ended in nought.

Was made a question of being by the early philosophers. Thales.

5. This mistaken direction showed itself most in the earliest period of speculation. Thus, when Thales maintained that moisture, or when Anaxagoras proclaimed that air, was the one in the many —the principle common to all existence—the research was evidently an inquiry into being, and moreover

into mere material being. Such crude essays are memorable only as early indications of a right tendency wrongly directed; the right tendency being the inclination to detect some one circumstance common to a multitude of diversified phenomena—its wrong direction being the application of this inclination to the phenomena of existence, and not, in the first instance, to the phenomena of cognition. PROP. VI.

6. Parmenides extended the inquiry beyond mere sensible or material existence; but he effected no revolution in the character of the problem. Conceiving that the only truth worthy of a philosopher's consideration was such as could not possibly be other than it is; and aware, moreover, that truth characterised by this strict necessity could not be found amid the phenomena of sense, he rejected, as of no value in philosophy, the meagre results of the physical inquirers who had preceded him. The central and abiding principle of the universe, the common quality, the binding unity in all things, must present itself, not only as an actual fact of nature, but as a necessary truth of reason. Intelligence must be incompetent to think it otherwise than it is. Its negation must be a contradiction, an absurdity. Such a principle, therefore, cannot be found in the material world,—cannot be apprehended by the senses; for these might have been different from what they are, and all their intimations might have been different. Parmenides. What change he effected on the question.

PROP. VI.

So far Parmenides got. He removed the inquiry from the region of contingency into the region of necessity. But he did not shift it from the field of Being to that of Knowing.

It still related to Being—not to Knowing.

7. This change was important. A great step is gained so soon as necessary, and not contingent, truth is felt to be the right object of speculative interest, and to have a paramount claim on our regard. But the revolution being incomplete—the question still being, What is?—not, What is known?—the research continued to turn in a circle without making any advance. Parmenides and his school kept swimming in a fatal eddy. There is, said they, one Being in all Being, or rather in all Becoming,—a universal essence which changes not with the vicissitudes of mundane things. And this one Being, this essence of all existence, is the only *true* Being. But *what* is it, this one Being,—this universal essence? The only answer is, that it is the one Being, the never-changing essence, the immutable amid the mutable, the necessary amid the contingent, and so forth. The childish generalisations of the school of Thales are quite as satisfactory as these unreasoned and unmeaning repetitions.

8. When it is said that these philosophers speculated concerning the nature of Being, and not concerning the nature of Knowing, this does not mean

PROP. VI.

Indecision of Greek speculation. The three crises of philosophy.

that they entered on the former research under the influence of any clear and deliberate preference, or adhered to it exclusively. The distinction, at that time, had not been definitely made; even to this hour it has never been clearly laid down, or kept constantly in view. It is not, therefore, to be supposed that these philosophers expressly excluded the laws and constitution of knowledge from their consideration. An inorganic epistemology, like a primitive stratum, crops out, at intervals, through the crust of their ontological lucubrations; and their conjectures about existence are interspersed with notices about cognition. There is, indeed, a constant tendency in their speculations to work the question round from the one of these topics into the other, and to ask not only, how do things exist; how and what are they; what renders them existent? but also to raise the very different question, how are things known; how and what do we think about them; what renders them intelligible? The crude cosmogonies which have the former investigation in view, break asunder ever and anon, and afford glimpses of intellectual systems which aim at the solution of the latter more accessible problem. This obscure movement, this wavering to and fro between the question of Being and that of Knowing, is the chief point of interest in the development of the Greek metaphysic. But while it was going on, it had the effect of entangling the operations of reason in coils

PROP. VI.

which it is scarcely possible to unravel. Philosophy has three crises: First, when the nature of Being, or the question, What is? is proposed for solution before the nature of Knowing, or the question, What is known? is taken into consideration; Secondly, when Being and Knowing are inquired into together, and indiscriminately, by means of a mixed research; and, Thirdly, when the nature of knowing is examined, and the question, What is known? is asked and answered before any attention is given to the problem which relates to existence. During the first period there is most error, for the whole method is wrong; the order of procedure is inverted. Here speculation is at its minimum. During the second period there is most confusion, for the attempt to carry out the two theories simultaneously, and not in succession, gives rise to the utmost disorder. But there is less error, for the revolution which adjourns the one question, and brings the other round for examination, is in progress. The method is coming right; speculation is beginning to assert itself. But it is only during the third period that light can be looked for, when all consideration of that which *exists* is resolutely waived, until that which *is known* has been determined. Speculation is then on the ascendant.

9. The writings of Plato are eminently characteristic of the second of these crises. In the hands of this philosopher, the discussion respecting the

particular and the universal became a mixed research, in which the attempt was made to determine, at one stroke, both what is, and what is known. The *existing* particular and universal (the former element being the τὸ γιγνόμενον, the latter the τὸ ὄν) was no longer the sole or perhaps even the main object of inquiry. It was considered along with the *known* particular and universal; the former element being the τὸ αἰσθητόν, the latter the εἶδος, or ἰδέα. The two speculations, which, however, were continually interlacing, went on side by side; and the result given out, as may be inferred from a liberal interpretation of the spirit of the Platonic philosophy, was that the known and the existent are coincident. The particular and the universal in existence were declared to be, in all essential respects, identical with the particular and universal in cognition.

Plato appeared during the second crisis. His aim.

10. And doubtless this coincidence is the highest truth which Philosophy seeks to establish—is the sublimest lesson she can teach. To this end all her labours are directed, all her instructions minister. To prove it, is to reach the TRUTH. But the coincidence of the known and the existent—the equation of Knowing and Being—is not to be assumed: it is not enough merely to surmise it. Its exhibition must be reasoned, and this reasoning is the most delicate, as well as the most extensive operation in metaphysics. It is indeed nothing less than the

The coincidence of the known and the existent must be proved, not guessed at.

PROP. VI.

whole length of that dialectical chain, the laying out of whose separate links in an unbroken sequence of demonstrated propositions is the end which these Institutes have in view. And this undertaking can be carried to a successful issue only by an ascertainment of the conditions on which alone any knowledge is possible—no respect being paid, in the first instance, and pending that preliminary inquisition, to anything which may be supposed to exist.

Plato's deficiencies.

11. Here it was that Plato broke down. Instead of proving the coincidence of the known and the existent, he assumed it. But this assumption did not require the genius of a Plato: any man could have assumed it. What was wanted was its demonstration: for unreasoned truth is an alien from philosophy, although it may not be an outcast from humanity. But this proof Plato did not supply. His method, indeed, or rather want of method, rendered anything like a demonstration impossible. For the solution of the problem requires, as its very condition, that the two questions, which he ran into one, should be kept perfectly distinct. Hence his ultimate conclusion, however true, is groundless. Hence, too, the perplexed character of his whole train of speculation. His doctrine of Knowing is so closely intertwisted with his doctrine of Being, that it may be doubted whether his own eye could trace the strands of the discussion, or whether the filaments themselves were

separate. His expositors, at any rate, have never been able to give any intelligible account of either theory, whether viewed separately, or viewed in their amalgamation. PROP. VI.

12. Nevertheless, if Plato was confused and unsystematic in execution, he was large in design, and magnificent in surmises. His pliant genius sits close to universal reality, like the sea which fits in to all the sinuosities of the land. Not a shore of thought was left untouched by his murmuring lip. Over deep and over shallow he rolls on, broad, urbane, and unconcerned. To this day, all philosophic truth is Plato rightly divined; all philosophic error is Plato misunderstood. Out of this question respecting the particular and the universal, as moved by him, came the whole philosophy of the Alexandrian absolutists, the whole contentions of the medieval schoolmen. Around it all modern speculation gravitates. Even psychology has laid her small finger on this gigantic theme, and vainly imagines that she has settled it for ever. But the wheel of controversy still moves round in darkness, and no explanation hitherto offered has sufficed to arrest the flying truth or to dispel the gloom. Realism, conceptualism, and nominalism, have all been tried in vain: they are all equally at fault. These quack medicaments bring no relief. These shallow words are not the

His merits. The question respecting the particular and the universal demands an entire reconsideration.

> Verba et voces quibus hunc lenire dolorem
> Possis.

PROP. VI.

No one knows where the exact point of the controversy—the true cause of the confusion—lies. To reach the source of the mischief, as well as the healing springs, the whole question, both in itself and in its history, must be excavated anew.

A preliminary ambiguity.

13. A preliminary ambiguity presents itself. The doctrine of the particular and the universal, whether considered in relation to knowledge, or in relation to existence, is nowhere embodied by Plato in any distinct proposition. It may, therefore, mean either, first, that every cognition is *both* particular *and* universal; in other words, that each cognition has a part peculiar to itself, and a part common to all cognition—is, in short, a synthesis of both factors, as affirmed in this sixth proposition; or, secondly, it may mean that every cognition is *either* particular *or* universal; in other words, that some cognitions contain only that which is peculiar to them, while others consist only of that which is common to all, or to many cognitions. In short, that some cognitions are mere particular cognitions, and the others are mere universal cognitions; or, more shortly, that either factor by itself may constitute a cognition.

Further statement of ambiguity.

14. The same ambiguity pervades his doctrine of the particular and the universal, considered in relation to existence. It may either mean that every existence is both particular and universal—that each

existing thing has a part peculiar to itself, and a part common to all, or to many existing things; or it may mean that every existence is either particular or universal; in other words, that some beings contain only that which is peculiar to them, while others consist only of that which is common to all or to many beings; in short, that some existences are mere particular existences, and that others are mere universal or general existences. PROP. VI.

15. Or the question may be put in this way: Is Plato's analysis of knowledge and of existence a division of these into *elements* (a particular element and a universal element), or is it a division of them into *kinds* (a particular kind and a universal kind)? It is obvious that these divisions are very different, and that, until we know which of the two is intended, we can make no progress, and should run into extreme confusion, were we to acknowledge no distinction between them, or mistake the one for the other. When the chemist (to illustrate this matter) analyzes certain substances—salts, for example—into elements, finds a common base on the one hand, and certain specific differences on the other, we should fall into a serious error were we to suppose that each of the elements was a *kind* of salt; just as we should fall into an equal error if, on his dividing salts into kinds or classes, we were to suppose that each of the classes was a mere *element* of salt. When Illustrations of the ambiguity.

PROP. VI.

the logician, in the terms of the hackneyed definition, analyzes human beings into "organised and rational," our mistake would be considerable, were we to understand his statement as a division of human beings into kinds; for, in that case, we should conceive one class of men to be organised, but not rational, and another class to be rational, but not organised. The division must be accepted as a resolution of human nature into its essential constituents—to wit, bodily organisation and reason. Again, when human beings are divided into male and female, this is a separation of them into kinds; to mistake it for an analysis of mankind into elements would lead to very awkward misapprehensions.

Is the Platonic analysis of cognition and existence a division into *elements* or into *kinds*?

16. So in regard to the analysis of cognition and of existence. It is one thing to say that all cognitions and all existences contain both a universal and particular element; it is quite a different thing to say that every cognition and every existence is either a particular or a universal cognition—a particular or a universal existence. These two affirmations, although apparently akin, and very liable to be mistaken for each other, are so far from being the same that each is the direct denial of the other. For if the analysis be a division into elements, and if every cognition and every existence must be both particular and universal, there cannot be one kind of cognition which is particular, and another kind which is uni-

versal, or one kind of existence which is particular, and another kind which is universal. The elements of cognition, and the elements of existence, cannot be themselves cognitions or existences, any more than the elements of salt can be themselves salts. To suppose the elements of cognition to be themselves cognitions, or the elements of existence to be themselves existences, would be to mistake the division into elements for the division into kinds. Again, if the analysis be a division into kinds, and if every cognition and every existence must be either particular or universal, there can be no cognitions and no existences which are both particular and universal. Kinds of cognition, and kinds of existence, can never be mere elements of cognition, or elements of existence, any more than the different kinds of salts can be mere elements of salt: and to suppose them to be such, would be to mistake the division into kinds for the division into elements. Thus the two analyses are not only different; they are absolutely incompatible with each other. Each denies all that the other affirms. It is, therefore, a point of essential importance to determine which of the two was contemplated by Plato in his theory of Knowing and Being. He divides all cognition into the particular and the universal. That is certain: the doubtful point is, whether the analysis is a division into elements, or a division into kinds; for it cannot be both. He likewise divides all exist-

PROP. VI.

PROP. VI.

ence into the particular and the universal. That, also, is certain. But is this analysis a division into elements or into kinds? That is the point which Plato has left somewhat undecided; and it is one on which we must come to a distinct understanding if we would comprehend his philosophy, either in itself or in its bearings on the subsequent course of speculation.

Rightly interpreted, it is a division into elements.

17. Although no express decision of this question can be found in the writings of Plato, the whole tenor of his speculations proves beyond a doubt that his aim, in both cases, was the ascertainment of elements, and not the enumeration of kinds; and that in affirming that all knowledge and all existence was both particular and universal, he intended to deny, and virtually did deny, that some cognitions and some existences were merely particular, and that others were merely universal. Whether this denial is a true doctrine in so far as existence is concerned, must be reserved for subsequent consideration; that question cannot be touched upon in the epistemology. But it is certainly a true doctrine in so far as knowledge is concerned, and as such it is advanced and advocated in this sixth proposition. In justice, therefore, to Plato—for every philosopher is entitled to the best construction which can be put upon his opinions—we are bound to hold that his analysis of cognition and of existence was intended as a resolu-

tion of these into their elements; and being this, it was equivalent to a denial that these elements were kinds of cognition or kinds of existence. If a man maintains that every drop of water is composed of the two elements, hydrogen and oxygen, he virtually denies that hydrogen, by itself, is a kind of water, and that oxygen, by itself, is a kind of water. So if a man affirms that every existence consists of two elements, and that every cognition consists of two elements, he virtually denies that either of the elements, by itself, is a kind of existence or a kind of cognition. This position, affirmative and negative, we believe Plato to have occupied. PROP. VI.

18. But various obstacles prevented this doctrine from being accepted, or even understood. The main impediment was that which has been already insisted on—the neglect to keep the theory of Knowing distinct from the theory of Being, and to work out the one completely before entering on the other. This omission threw the whole undertaking into disorder, and led to a total misconception of the character of the Platonic analysis. Plato's epistemology was unripe. He had merely succeeded in carrying our cognitions up into certain subordinate unities, certain inferior universals, called by him *ideas*, and which afterwards, under the name of genera and species, afforded such infinite torment to the schoolmen, until they were disposed of, and laid at rest

It has been generally mistaken for a division into kinds.

PROP. VI.

for a time, by the short-sighted exorcisms of psychology. But there he stuck. He failed to carry them up into their highest unity. He missed the *real* and crowning universal, and lost himself among fictitious ones. The *summum genus* of cognition, which is no abstraction but a living reality, has no place in his system. He has nowhere announced *what* it is. Hence his theory of knowledge was left incomplete, and being incomplete it was unintelligible; for in philosophy the completed alone is the comprehensible. His theory of existence was still more bewildering: it was burthened with its own difficulties and defects, besides those entailed upon it by an epistemology which was very considerably in arrear. This, the ontological aspect of the Platonic doctrine, was the side which was chiefly looked to, and which principally influenced the philosophy of succeeding times. Yet what could be made of a doctrine which asserted that all existence was both particular and universal, in the face of an unbounded creation, apparently teeming with merely particular existences? That position seemed to be checkmated at once, both by the senses and the reason of mankind. Could Plato have maintained a thesis so indefensible? That was scarcely credible: and altogether the perplexity was so great that philosophers were driven to accept the other alternative, as the simpler and more intelligible interpretation of the two, and to construe the Platonic analysis of Knowing

and Being as a division of these into kinds, and not into elements. They supposed Plato to maintain that every cognition and every existence is *either* particular *or* universal; and thus they ascribed to him the very doctrine which he virtually denied, and took from him the very doctrine which he virtually affirmed. PROP. VI.

19. This charge requires some explanation. When it is said that philosophers generally have misapprehended the Platonic analysis, this does not mean that they expressly adopted the wrong interpretation, and expressly disavowed the right one. They were not thus explicit in their error: they did not perceive the wideness of the distinction between kinds and elements, and, therefore, all that is meant is that they manifested a marked bias in favour of the wrong interpretation without adhering to it consistently. The most perplexing cases with which the historian of philosophy has to deal are those in which he finds two mutually contradictory doctrines advocated without any suspicion of their repugnancy, and as if they were little more than two forms of one and the same opinion. It is difficult to deal with a case of this kind, because it may seem unfair to charge a writer with maintaining an opinion when, at the same time, he advances something which directly contradicts it. The only way of coming to a settlement is by taking into account the general tone and scope of his observations, and by giving Explanation of this charge.

PROP. VI.

him credit for the doctrine towards which he appears most to incline. The case before us is one of this description. The discordancy of the two analyses was not perceived by those who speculated in the wake of Plato. Hence, at one time, they may speak of the particular and the universal as if these were mere elements, and, at another time, as if they were kinds of cognition or of existence. But the prevailing tone of their discussions shows that they favoured the latter interpretation. Plato is supposed to have held that there was a lower kind of knowledge (particular cognitions, sensible impressions), which was conversant with a lower class of things—namely, particular existences; and a higher kind of knowledge (universal cognitions, general conceptions, ideas), which dealt with a higher order of things—to wit, universal existences. An inferior kind of knowledge occupied about particulars, and a superior kind of knowledge occupied about universals—that is the doctrine usually ascribed to Plato; and most fatal has this perversion of his meaning proved to the subsequent fortunes of philosophy. The general tenor of speculation during the last two thousand years, as well as its present aspect, betrays at every turn and in every feature the influence of this cardinal misconception—this transmutation of elements into kinds—this mistaking for cognitions of what are the mere factors of cognition.

PROP. VI.

Sixth counter-proposition.

20. This erroneous interpretation, and indeed reversal of the Platonic doctrine, after giving rise to interminable controversies, which shall be noticed immediately, has at length settled down in the following counter-proposition, which represents faithfully the ordinary psychological deliverance on the subject of knowledge—the topic of existence being of course kept out of the question at present. *Sixth counter-proposition:* "Every cognition is either particular or universal (also called general); in other words, there is a knowledge of the changeable, contingent, and particular part of cognition, to the exclusion of the unchangeable, necessary, and universal part; and a knowledge of the unchangeable, necessary, and universal part, to the exclusion of the changeable, contingent, and particular part. Thus there is one kind of knowledge which is particular, and another kind which is universal or general. The particular cognitions are cognitions of particular things only—such as this tree, that book, and so forth. These precede the universal or general cognitions, which are subsequent formations. The latter are cognitions, not of universal things, but of nonentities. They are mere fabrications of the mind formed by means of abstraction and generalisation. They are also termed conceptions or general notions,—such notions as are expressed by the words *man*, *animal*, *tree*, and all other terms denoting genera and species."

PROP. VI.

This counter-proposition itself a proof of the charge here made against philosophers.

21. The statement of this counter-proposition is sufficient of itself to prove the truth of the charge advanced against philosophers, namely, that they have misinterpreted the Platonic analysis, and have mistaken for cognitions what Plato laid down as mere elements of cognition—and which, being mere elements of cognitions, could not, by any possibility, be cognitions themselves. For it is certain that, in the opinion of psychology as declared in this counter-proposition, the particular cognitions are entertained by the mind before the general ones are formed, which they could not be held to be, unless they were held to be a distinct species of cognition. But if the particular are held to be distinct from the general cognitions, it is plain that the latter must be held to be distinct from the former. It is also certain that this doctrine has been inherited by psychology from a source much older than herself; and that this source can be no other than the misinterpretation which has been just laid to the charge of philosophers—and the truth of which allegation is now clearly established by these considerations. Had the Platonic analysis been rightly understood, and its true meaning been widely disseminated at first, no such doctrine as that embodied in the counter-proposition could ever have obtained an ascendancy, or even found a place, in philosophy.

22. Before touching on the controversies to which

allusion has been made, it may be well to review our position. The Platonic analysis of knowledge and existence into the particular and the universal admits of two interpretations. The particular and the universal may be either elements or kinds; and if they are the one, they cannot be the other. These two interpretations, being directly opposed to each other, open up two separate lines for speculation to move along. The one line which issues from the right interpretation—that, namely, which declares that the particular and the universal are mere elements—has never yet been followed out,—scarcely even entered upon. Philosophy has travelled almost entirely on the other line, which proceeds from the wrong interpretation—that, namely, which holds that the particular and the universal are kinds of cognition and kinds of existence. This path has been the highway on which systems have jostled systems and strewn the road with their ruins, since the days of Plato down through the middle ages, and on to the present time. And now, standing in the very source of the mistake which feeds the whole of them, and in which they all join issue — the misconception, namely, which has been already sufficiently described—we are in a position to unravel the controversies in which they were engaged, and to understand how none of them should have succeeded in establishing any truth of its own, however successful they may have been in refuting the errors of each other.

PROP. VI.

Review of our position.

PROP. VI.

Misinterpretation of the Platonic analysis traced into its consequences.

23. Our business, then, is to trace into its consequences, as manifested in the history of philosophy, the current misinterpretation of the Platonic analysis of knowledge and existence. Cognitions being supposed to be divided by Plato into two kinds or classes—a particular and a universal kind—and not into two elements—a particular and a universal element—the question immediately arose, What is the nature of the existences which correspond to these classes of cognition? In regard to the particular class there was little or no difficulty. The particular existences around us—this table, that chair, or book, or tree—these and the like particular things were held to correspond to our particular cognitions. In such a statement there may be no great novelty or interest; but it seems to contain nothing but what a plain man may very readily concede. Whether it be *really* intelligible or not, it is, at any rate, *apparently* intelligible.

Perplexity as to general existences.

24. But what kind of existences correspond to the universal cognitions? That was the puzzle. If the analysis of cognition be a division into kinds, and if the particular cognitions are distinct from the universal, and have their appropriate objects—to wit, particular things—the universal cognitions must, of course, be distinct from the particular, and must have *their* appropriate objects. What, then, are these objects? What is the nature and manner

of their existence? What beings are there *in rerum natura* corresponding to the universal cognitions—to such cognitions as are expressed by the words "man," or "animal," or "tree"? Whatever difficulties the right interpretation of the Platonic doctrine might have given rise to, considerable excitement would have been avoided by its adoption, because by this inevitable question, which the other interpretation would have obviated, the philosophers of a later day, and in particular the schoolmen, were driven nearly frantic with vexation and despair. PROP. VI.

25. Those who, to their misunderstanding of Plato, united a reverence for his name, and for what they conceived to be his opinions, maintained that the universals—such genera and species as man, animal, and tree—had an actual existence in nature, distinct, of course, from all particular men, animals, or trees. They could not do otherwise; for their master declares that the universal, both in knowledge and in existence, is more real than the particular—meaning thereby that it is more real as an element, but not certainly as a kind, either of cognition or of existence. His followers, however, who mistook his analysis, and at the same time placed implicit reliance on his word, were bound, in consistency, to contend for the independent and concrete existence of universal things. Whether these genera and species were corporeal or incorporeal, they were Realism.

PROP. VI.

somewhat at a loss to determine; but that they were real they entertained no manner of doubt. And, accordingly, the doctrine known in the history of philosophy under the name of Realism, was enthroned in the schools, and being supported by the supposed authority of Plato, and in harmony with certain theological tenets then dominant, it kept its ascendancy for a time.

Realism is superseded by Conceptualism.

26. Realism, even in its most extravagant form, is not one whit more erroneous than the two doctrines which supplanted it. First came conceptualism. The actual independent existence of genera and species was too ridiculous and unintelligible an hypothesis to find favour with those who deferred more to reason than to authority. They accordingly surrendered universals considered as independent entities; and now, inasmuch as the old sources of our universal cognitions were thus extinguished with the extinction of the realities from which they had been supposed to proceed, these philosophers, in order to account for them, were thrown upon a new hypothesis, which was this: they held that all existences are particular, and also, that all our knowledge is, in the first instance, particular; that we start from particular cognitions; but that the mind, by a process of abstraction and generalisation, which consists in attending to the resemblances of things, leaving out of view their differences, subsequently constructs

conceptions, or general notions, or universal cognitions, which, however, are mere *entia rationis*, and have no existence out of the intelligence which fabricates them. These genera and species were held to have an ideal, though not a real, existence, and to be the objects which the mind contemplates when it employs such words as man, tree, or triangle. This doctrine is called Conceptualism. PROP. VI.

27. The question very soon arose, Have these universal cognitions or general conceptions any existence even within the intelligence which is said to fabricate them? It is obvious there is no object *in nature* corresponding to the genus animal, or to the species man, or to the genus figure, or to the species triangle. But is there any object *in thought* corresponding to these genera and species? There certainly is not. These general terms are mere words, mere sounds, which have no objects corresponding to them either within the mind or out of it,—either in thought or in reality. Their ideal is quite as baseless and as fabulous as their real existence. So says Nominalism, speaking a truth which, when understood, is seen to be unquestionable. Conceptualism is destroyed by Nominalism.

28. The grounds of nominalism, however, are not very well understood, even by the nominalists themselves; and hence conceptualism is supposed to recover her position, or at least to effect a compromise

PROP. VI.

Evasion by which conceptualism endeavours to recover her ground, and to conciliate nominalism. Its failure.

with her adversary, by affirming that the object which the mind contemplates when it employs a general term is some resemblance, some point or points of similarity, which it observes among a number of particular things, and that to this resemblance it gives a name expressive of the genus to which the things in question belong. This explanation—which, although it is as old as the earliest defence of conceptualism, and a traditional commonplace in every logical compendium, has been paraded, in recent times, by Dr Brown, almost as if it were a novelty of his own discovery—betrays a total misconception of the point really at issue. Conceptualism cannot be permitted to take any advantage from this shallow evasion, in which a doctrine is advanced altogether inconsistent with the principle from which she starts. It is to be remembered that this scheme divides our cognitions, not into elements of cognition, but into cognitions—not into distinct factors, but into distinct kinds, of knowledge—a particular kind, called sometimes intuitions; and a universal, or general kind, called usually conceptions. This is proved by the consideration that in the estimation of conceptualism our particular cognitions *precede* the formation of our general conceptions, which they could not do unless they were distinct and completed. The question, therefore, is not, Does the mind know or think of the universal *along with* the particular—the genus *along with* the sin-

gulars which compose it—the resemblance of things *along with* the things in which the resemblance subsists? In a word, the question is not, Is the conception always and only entertained along with the intuitions? Conceptualism cannot clear herself by raising that question, and answering it in the affirmative; for such an answer would be equivalent to the admission that the general cognitions (the conceptions) are not a kind of cognition, are not themselves cognitions, but are mere elements of cognition. But conceptualism is debarred from that plea by the position which she has taken up at the outset. She is bound to show—if she would make good her scheme — that just as the particular cognitions stand distinct from the general cognitions, so the latter stand distinct from the former. The question, therefore, with which conceptualism has to deal is this: does the mind know or think of the universal without thinking of the particular—of the genus, without taking into account any of the singulars which compose it — of the resemblance among things, without looking, either really or ideally, to the things to which the resemblance belongs? In a word, can the conceptions be objects of the mind *without* the intuitions,—just as, according to conceptualism, the intuitions can be objects of the mind without the conceptions? That is the only question for conceptualism to consider, and to answer in the affirmative, *if she can*. But

PROP. VI.

it is obvious that it can be answered only in the negative: the mind cannot have any conception of a genus or a species without taking into account some of the particular things which they include. It cannot think of the resemblance of things without thinking of the resembling things. And hence, all genera and all species, and everything which is said to be the object of the mind when it entertains a general conception, are mere words—sounds to which no meaning can be attached, when looked at irrespective of the particulars to which they refer. Thus conceptualism is destroyed. It perishes in consequence of the principle from which it starts—the division, namely, of our cognitions into kinds, and not into elements. The dilemma to which it is reduced is this: it must either stand to that distinction, or it must desert it. If conceptualism stands to the distinction, and maintains that the general conceptions are distinct cognitions—are ideas cognisable by themselves, and independently of the particular cognitions—in that case the general conceptions evaporate in mere words; for it is certain that the mind cannot think of any genus without thinking of one or more of the particulars which rank under it. Thus nominalism is triumphant. Again, if conceptualism deserts the distinction, and admits that the general conceptions are not cognitions which can be entertained irrespective of the particular cognitions—in that case the general cognitions are reduced from

cognitions to mere elements of cognition; for a thought which cannot stand in the mind by itself is not a thought, but only a factor of thought. And thus we have a most incongruous doctrine,—an analysis which divides our cognitions into a kind and into an element. For conceptualism still cleaves to the doctrine of particular cognitions as distinct from the general ones, although, when hard pressed, she seems willing to admit that the latter are not distinct from the former. Here the confusion becomes hopeless. This is as if we were, first, to divide human beings into men and women, and were then to affirm that the men only were human beings, and that the women were mere elements of human beings,—and finally, were to declare that although the men were different from the women, the women were not different from the men. That hank, which illustrates the confused subterfuges of conceptualism, we shall not waste time in unravelling.

29. Nominalism stands victorious; but nominalism, too, is doomed very speedily to fall. The character of nominalism is this: it holds that all existences are particular; and that all cognitions are particular at first, and that they remain for ever particular. There are no such entities, either real or ideal, either in the mind or out of it, as general conceptions: but what is supposed to be such is always some mere particular cognition, which, by a

Nominalism.

PROP. VI.

determination of thought, is allowed to stand as representative of all cognitions and presentations which may resemble it. Thus there is no conception of triangle in general. When the mind thinks of this figure, it always conceives one or more definite and particular triangles, which it accepts as representative of all possible or actual triangles. It thinks of one or of several triangles with a mental reservation, that the varieties of which that figure is susceptible are not exhausted by the specimens of which it is thinking. This is what the mind does, when it supposes itself to be contemplating a general conception—it is, all the while, contemplating one or more which are merely particular. Thus, all our cognitions from first to last are particular—the only difference between those which are particular, and those which are called general, being that the latter are accepted as types or samples of all similar cognitions.

Nominalism is annihilated by Proposition VI.

30. The error into which nominalism runs is the assumption that all or any of our cognitions are merely particular. If conceptualism is wrong in holding that any general conception by itself can be an object of the mind, nominalism is equally wrong in holding that any particular cognition by itself can be an object of the mind. Whether anything that exists is merely particular, we do not at present inquire; but it is certain that nothing which is known is merely particular, because all knowledge,

as has been proved by this sixth proposition, is of necessity a synthesis of the particular and the universal. Particular cognitions (the cognition, for example, of this pen absolutely by itself) are mere words, just as much as the general ideas expressed by tree, man, animal, and so forth, taken absolutely by themselves, are mere words. Particular cognitions, which involve no generality, are not conceivable, any more than general cognitions are conceivable which involve no particularity. For every cognition (see Demonstration VI.) must have an element common to all cognition, and also an element peculiar to itself. All knowledge requires two factors, one of which is particular, and the other universal. This consideration effects the complete demolition of nominalism. PROP. VI.

31. The summing up is this: All the errors inherited by the systems which have been brought under review, originate in the capital oversight which mistakes the elements of cognition for kinds of cognition—the factors of ideas for ideas themselves, the constituents of thought for thoughts. This mistake was equivalent to the hypothesis that some cognitions were particular, and that others were general, or universal. This hypothesis, when carried into ontology, led to the further mistake that there were general existences in nature corresponding to the general cognitions, just as there were held to be par- The summing up.

PROP. VI.

ticular existences in nature corresponding to the particular cognitions. The doctrine of Realism was proclaimed. Realism was corrected by conceptualism, which maintained that the general existences had no reality in nature, but only an ideality in the mind—that they existed only as abstractions, and were not independent of the intelligence which fabricates them. This scheme fell dead before the assaults of nominalism, which asserted, and with perfect truth, that these general existences had not even an ideality in the mind—that the genera and species had no distinct standing, even as abstractions, and that intelligence was incompetent to create or to contemplate them—in short, that, considered by themselves, they were mere sounds or signs without any sense. And, finally, nominalism, having accomplished this good work, is struck down, and gives up the ghost, under the battery of this sixth proposition. Whether the particular things, the independent existence of which is assumed by nominalism, do really so exist or not, is a point on which the epistemology offers no opinion. But it declares unequivocally that the particular cognitions which are held to correspond to these particular things have no existence in the mind. They have no footing there, even as abstractions. For this sixth proposition has proved that no intelligence is competent to harbour either a particular cognition or a universal cognition—inasmuch as it has proved that every cognition is a synthesis

of these two factors, and must present both a particular and a universal constituent. Those, however, who may think otherwise, will find satisfaction in the counter-proposition which states, it is believed, with perfect fairness, the ordinary opinion. PROP. VI.

32. It is worthy of remark, in conclusion, that the errors of philosophy have continually deepened in proportion as its character and tendencies have waxed more and more psychological. The science of the human mind, as it is called, has done incalculable mischief to the cause of speculative truth. The doctrine of abstraction, in particular, one of its favourite themes, has been the parent of more aberrations than can be told. Our psychologists may guard and explain themselves as they please, but their attribution to man of a faculty called abstraction has been, from first to last, the most disconcerting and misleading hypothesis which either they or their readers could have entertained. We are supposed to have a power of forming abstract conceptions; but it is obvious from the foregoing observations that we have no such power, and that no abstract idea, either particular or general, can be attained by any intelligence. Such conceptions can only be approximated. When the mind attends more to the particular than to the universal element, or, conversely, more to the universal than to the particular element of any The abstract and the concrete.

PROP. VI.

cognition, the abstract particular—that is, a thing by itself, or the abstract universal—that is, the genus by itself, is approached, but neither of them is ever reached. To reach either of them is impracticable, for this would require the entire suppression of one or other of the factors of all cognition, and such a suppression would not be equivalent to the attainment of the abstract, but to the extinction of knowledge and intelligence. Had our psychologists informed us that the main endowment of reason is a faculty which *prevents* abstractions from being formed, there would have been much truth in the remark; for intelligence cannot deal with abstractions. Abstract thinking is a contradiction, and has no place in the economy of the intellect. Such thinking is only apparent—never real. All knowledge and all thought are concrete, and deal only with concretions — the concretion of the particular and the universal. *What* the particular and the universal are, which constitute the concrete reality of cognition, is declared in the next proposition.

PROPOSITION VII.

WHAT THE UNIVERSAL AND THE PARTICULAR IN COGNITION ARE.

The ego (or mind) is known as the element common to all cognition,—matter is known as the element peculiar to some cognitions: in other words, we know *ourselves* as the unchangeable, necessary, and universal part of our cognitions, while we know matter, in all its varieties, as a portion of the changeable, contingent, and particular part of our cognitions—or, expressed in the technical language of logic, the ego is the known *summum genus*, the known generic part, of all cognitions—matter is the known differential part of some cognitions.

DEMONSTRATION.

It is a necessary truth of reason that the ego must be known (that is, must be known to itself) when-

PROP. VII. ever it knows anything at all (by Prop. I.): in other words, no cognition, in which one does not apprehend oneself, is possible. Therefore the ego or oneself is known as the element common to all cognitions—that is, as the *summum genus* of cognition. Again, it is not a necessary truth of reason that matter must be known whenever anything at all is known: in other words, cognitions in which no material element is apprehended, are, if not actual, at any rate possible and conceivable. No contradiction is involved in that supposition; and, therefore, matter is not known as the element common to all cognition, but only as the element peculiar to some cognitions—that is, as the differential part of some cognitions. And hence the ego is the unchangeable, necessary, and universal part of cognition, while matter, in all its varieties, is only a portion (not the whole) of the changeable contingent and particular part of cognition.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

Why this Proposition is introduced.

1. Although this proposition is, in its first clause, a mere repetition of Proposition I., its introduction is necessary, in order to mark distinctly what the elements are which enter into the constitution of knowledge. It is not enough to show, as was done in the immediately preceding proposition, that every cognition must embrace a particular and a universal

part. *What* these parts are must also be exhibited; and this, accordingly, is done in the present article. The ego or self is, of necessity, known along with whatever is known; hence it enters into the composition of every cognition, and is the permanent and universal factor of knowledge. Wherever anything at all is known, *it* is known. Matter, on the other hand, is known as that which enters into the composition of many, perhaps of most, of our cognitions; but inasmuch as reason does not assure us that all knowledge is impossible, except when something (indefinitely) material is apprehended, and assures us still less that all knowledge is impossible, except when something (*definitely*) material is apprehended — matter is fixed, by that consideration, as the changeable, contingent, and particular part of cognition.

The ego is coextensive with the universal, matter is not coextensive with the particular, element.

2. Matter is not to be regarded as constituting the whole of the particular element of knowledge. The particular may have many forms besides those which we call material. Matter, therefore, in all its varieties, is only a portion of the phases of the particular. The ego is necessarily identical with the whole of the common and permanent element; because nothing can possibly be conceived, except itself, which an intelligence *must always* be cognisant of. But matter is not necessarily coextensive with the particular and changeable element, because much

PROP. VII.

may be conceived—if not actually by us, yet possibly by other intellects—besides matter, of which intelligence may be cognisant. Matter does not, of necessity, enter into the constitution of cognition. Something particular must be known whenever anything at all is known, but this particular need not be material; for, as has been said, the particular is not necessarily restricted to, and convertible with, matter, although the universal, when carried to its highest generalisation, is necessarily limited to, and convertible with, the ego.

Another reason for introducing this proposition.

3. Another reason for the introduction of this proposition is, that it is required as a stepping-stone to the next.

Remarkable that this proposition should not have been propounded long ago.

4. That the common, permanent, and necessary constituent of all knowledge should not have been brought clearly to light, and turned to good account, and had all its consequences pressed out of it long before now, is not a little remarkable. It has scarcely, however, been even enunciated—certainly not emphatically dwelt upon. There cannot be a doubt that speculation, from a very early period, has aimed at the ascertainment of the immutable and universal feature which all cognitions present. It might have been expected, therefore, that the first consideration which would have occurred to the inquirer would have been this, that the factor in

question must be that which we are more familiar with than we are with anything else—must be that, to find which we must have a very short way to go. For, surely, that which we always know, and cannot help knowing, must be that which we are best acquainted with, that which lies nearest to our hand, and which may be most readily laid hold of. This reflection might have been expected to bring him to the question, What, then, is that which we are most familiar with, and cannot help knowing, during every conscious moment of our lives? And this question would have been followed, one might have thought, by the prompt answer, It is *ourselves*. Nevertheless, both the question and the answer were missed. The common element has indeed been sometimes obscurely indicated, but its importance has never been sufficiently proclaimed; its fruits have never been gathered in. The words inscribed over the porch of the temple at Delphi, γνῶθι σεαυτον—which, properly interpreted, must mean "Consider well; it is *thyself*, oh man, that thou art conscious of, in and along with all that comes before thee"—have been oracular in vain. PROP. VII.

5. Several causes might be pointed out in explanation of this oversight: they are, however, mostly, if not entirely, reducible to the one great and leading cause which has been already referred to (p. 79); to wit, familiarity. The influence of this principle The oversight accounted for. Effect of familiarity.

PROP. VII.

in deadening the activity and susceptibility of the mind is overwhelming to an extreme. Drugged with this narcotic, man's intellect turns with indifference from the common and the trite, and courts only the startling and the strange. Every one must have remarked, both in his own case and in that of others, how prone we are to suppose that little advantage, and no valuable result, can accrue from a careful study of that to which we are thoroughly habituated. "Perpetual custom," says Cicero, "makes the mind callous, and people neither admire nor require a reason for those things which they constantly behold." Rare events are the natural aliment of wonder; and, when it cannot be supplied with these, our inquisitiveness is apt to languish and expire. Abundant examples of this tendency—this proneness to prefer the unusual to the customary, and to conceive that things are marvellous in proportion to their rarity, and that the seldomer they appear the more are they entitled to our regard—might be drawn from the practice of mankind in the daily conduct of life, as well as from the history of science in all periods, but especially in the earlier stages of its development. The Science of an untutored age passes by unheeded the ordinary appearances of nature; but her interest is easily aroused, her attention is readily enchained, by such mysterious portents as the earthquake and the eclipse. She is blind to the common and familiar phenomena of light; she is

deaf to the common and familiar phenomena of sound: she has eyes only for the lightning; ears only for the thunder. She asks with eager curiosity, PROP. VII.

Quæ fulminis esset origo,—
Jupiter, an venti, discussâ nube tonarent?

But she leaves unquestioned the normal or every-day presentments of the senses and the universe; she pays the tribute of admiration to nature's exceptions far more promptly than to her majestic rule.

6. It is thus that uncultivated men neglect their own household divinities, their tutelary Penates, and go gadding after idols that are strange. But this proclivity is not confined to them; it is a malady which all flesh is heir to. It is the besetting infirmity of the whole brotherhood of man. We naturally suppose that truth lies in the distance, and not at our very feet; that it is hid from our view, not by its proximity, but by its remoteness; that it is a commodity of foreign importation, and not of domestic growth. The farther it is fetched the better do we like it—the more genuine are we disposed to think it. The extraordinary moves us more, and is more relished, than the ordinary. The heavens are imagined to hold sublimer secrets than the earth. We conceive that what is the astonishing *to us*, is also the astonishing *in itself;* thus truly making "man the measure of the universe." We study the strange rather than the familiar, hence truth escapes us.

PROP. VII.

In this superstition the savage and the *savan* fraternise (bear witness, mesmerism, with all thy frightful follies!)—and, drunk with this idolatry, they seek for truth at the shrine of the far-off and the uncommon; not knowing that her ancient altars, invisible because continually beheld, rise close at hand, and stand on beaten ways. Well has the poet said,

> "That is the truly secret which lies ever open before us;
> And the least seen is that which the eye constantly sees."
>
> SCHILLER.

But, dead to the sense of these inspired words, we make no effort to shake off the drowsing influence, or to rescue our souls from the acquiescent torpor, which they denounce—no struggle to behold that which we lose sight of, only because we behold it too much, or to penetrate the heart of a secret which escapes us only by being too glaringly revealed. Instead of striving, as we ought, to render ourselves strange to the familiar, we strive, on the contrary, to render ourselves familiar with the strange. Hence our better genius is overpowered; and we are given over to a delirium, which we mistake for wisdom. Hence we are the slaves of mechanism, the inheritors and transmitters of privileged error; the bondsmen of convention, and not the free and deep-seeing children of reason. Hence we remain insensible to the true grandeurs and the sublimer wonders of Providence; for, is it to be conceived that the operations of God, and the order of the universe, are not admir-

able, precisely in proportion as they are ordinary; that they are not glorious, precisely in proportion as they are manifest; that they are not astounding, precisely in proportion as they are common? But man, blind to the marvels which he really sees, sees others to which he is really blind. He keeps stretching forwards into the distant; he ought to be straining backwards, and more back, into the near; for there, and only there, is the object of his longing to be found. Perhaps he may come round at last. Meanwhile, it is inevitable that he should miss the truth. PROP. VII.

7. The general fact which these remarks are intended to express is, that our knowledge of a thing is always naturally in an inverse ratio to our familiarity with it; that insight is always naturally at its minimum, wherever intimacy is at its maximum: in a word, that, under the influence of custom, the patent becomes the latent. This truth being unquestionable, it is not difficult to understand how philosophers should have failed to apprehend, or, at least, to give a marked prominence in their systems to the necessary and permanent element of all cognition. This element is the ego, or oneself. But the ego comes before us along with whatever comes before us. Hence we are familiar with it to an excess. We are absolutely surfeited with its presence. Hence we almost entirely overlook it; we attend to it but little. That neglect is inevitable. Its perpetual Hence neglect of this proposition.

PROP. VII.

presence is almost equivalent to its perpetual absence. And thus the ego, from the very circumstance of its being never absent from our cognitions, comes to be almost regarded as that which is never present in them at all. Our intimacy with self being the maximum of intimacy, our attention to self, conformably to the law of familiarity, is naturally the minimum of attention. It is thus that we would explain how it has happened that, although the article which philosophers were in quest of was one which, by the very terms of their search, was necessarily and continually known to them—inasmuch as what they wanted to lay hold of was the common and ever-present and never-changing element in all their knowledge—it should still have evaded their pursuit. The foregoing considerations may perhaps be sufficient to account for this memorable oversight, and to explain how the ego, from our very familiarity with it, should have escaped notice, as the permanent, necessary, and universal constituent of cognition; and how, consequently, the proposition which declares that such is its character should have failed, hitherto, to obtain in philosophy the place and the recognition which it deserves.

8. This also may be added, that the importance of a principle is never perceived, nor the necessity of announcing it ever felt like a commandment, until its consequences have been seen to be weighty, and

its fruits abundant. Here, before us, is a germ which, to the scythe of reason, yields a harvest of inestimable truth. But it seems, at first, to be little better than a barren truism; hence it has been suffered to slumber on, pregnant with unsuspected wealth, and charged with a moral sublimity more dread than "all the dread magnificence of heaven."

Another circumstance which may have caused the neglect of this proposition.

9. The ego is the known *summum genus* of cognitions—just as *ens* is laid down by logic, or rather by a spurious and perfunctory ontology, as the *summum genus* of things. Viewed even as a generalisation from experience, the ego may very easily be shown to occupy this position. Lay out of view, as much as possible, all the differences which our manifold cognitions present, and the ego, or oneself, will remain as their common point of agreement or resemblance. This is generalisation—the ascertainment of the one in the many by leaving out of account, as much as possible, the differences, and attending, as exclusively as may be, to the agreements of things. The epistemological must not be confounded with the ontological generalisation: much mischief has been done by confusing them. We perceive a number of living creatures. Overlooking their differences, and attending to their agreements, we give the name "animal" to the sum of the agreements observed in these creatures. We perceive a number of vegetable formations. Overlooking their differences, and attending to

The ego is the *summum genus* of cognition. Ontological generalisation.

PROP. VII.

their agreements, we give the name of "plant" to the sum of these agreements. Again overlooking the differences, and attending to the resemblances in animals and plants, we give the name of "organic" to the sum of these resemblances. And so on in regard to all other things. By overlooking the differences, and attending to the resemblances of singulars, we form a species; by overlooking the differences, and attending to the resemblances of species, we form a genus; by overlooking the differences, and attending to the resemblances of genera, we form a still higher genus, until we ascend up to *ens*, or "Being," the highest generalisation of ordinary ontology as described in the common schoolbooks upon logic. With this kind of generalisation we have no concern. It has been pointed out only that it may be carefully distinguished from the process now to be described.

Epistemological generalisation is very different.

10. The epistemological generalisation is altogether different. It has nothing to do with *things*, but only with *cognitions* of things. We have a number of cognitions of things—cognitions of living creatures, for example. Overlooking the differences as much as possible, and attending to the agreements of these cognitions, we give the name of "animal" to the sum of these agreements—not assigning it, however, to any resemblance in the creatures, but only to a resemblance in our cognitions of them.

And so on as before—the only difference being (and it is a very important one) that the words expressive of species and genera mark, not the resemblances among things, but the resemblances among cognitions. Thus the word "animal" betokens a point or points in which certain of our cognitions agree. So do the words "man" and "tree." Each of them is the expression of agreement among certain of our cognitions. Again, the word "organic" denotes a still higher generalisation—records a still higher unity among our cognitions. It indicates a point in which our cognitions of trees resemble our cognitions of animals. The word "body" expresses a still higher genus of cognition, for it indicates some feature in which our cognitions of trees, our cognitions of animals, and our cognitions of stones, all resemble one another. These words, and others like them, stand either for species, or lower or higher genera, not of existence, but of cognition. But none of them ever approaches to the universality which is expressed by the word *me*. For this term indicates a feature of resemblance, not merely among certain of our cognitions, but among the whole of them—the whole of them, possible as well as actual—the whole of them, past, present, and to come. All the other resemblances in our cognitions are, from a higher point of view, regarded as differences. Thus the resemblance in the cognitions expressed by the word "animal" is a difference

PROP. VII.

when set off against the resemblance in the cognitions expressed by the word "tree." But the resemblance in all our cognitions, which is properly signified by the word *me*, can never be converted into a difference. No class, or classes, of my cognitions are distinguished from another class, or classes, by the circumstance that they are *mine*. This is the very circumstance in which they are all *not* distinguished from each other—the very point in which the whole of them, whatever their character otherwise may be, are merged in identity. Hence "oneself," or the ego, is the *summum genus* of cognition—the ultimate generalisation beyond which epistemology cannot ascend. And a very different universal this is, from the ordinary abstract universal named *ens*, which is the logician's delight.

The ego not a *mere* generalisation from experience.

11. From these remarks it must not be concluded that the ego, considered as the *summum genus* of cognition, is a mere generalisation from experience. Were this the case, it would be destitute of that strict universality and necessity which reason claims for it, as the common element in every possible cognition of every possible intelligence. It is this by a necessary law of all cognition. But every necessary truth of reason, although not dependent on experience for its establishment, admits, nevertheless, of being *exhibited* as a generalisation from experience; and accordingly the ego has been exhibited as such

in the foregoing observations, in order that its character may be more clearly understood, and its universality more fully appreciated.

Shortcoming of the Platonic ideas.

12. One source of perplexity, in studying the Platonic ideas, is the uncertainty whether they are genera of cognitions or genera of things. Probably they were intended as both—another instance of ontology running prematurely into the same mould with epistemology. But the confusion signifies little; for, whether they be understood in reference to cognitions or in reference to things, it is certain that not one of them represents the highest unity, either of knowledge or of existence. It may be true that the mind cannot have cognitions of trees, unless it carries them up into the higher cognition (or unity) expressed by the genus "tree." But neither can the mind have these or any other cognitions, unless it carries them all up into the still higher cognition, or unity, expressed by the genus "self." All the other species and genera of cognition, expressed, for example, by the words "man," "flower," "animal," "body," &c., are mere subordinate unities, mere abstractions, which have no meaning, and no presentability to the mind, until carried up into the higher unity of *oneself*, and contemplated by me as *my*, or by him, whoever the person may be, as *his*, cognitions. Then only is our cognition concrete—that is, real, actual, completed, and comprehensible. When

PROP. VII.

I gaze upon an oak-tree, the concrete indivisible cognition before me consists of the four following items, none of which are cognitions, but all of which are mere elements of cognition:—first, The highest genus of cognition, *myself;* secondly, A lower genus of cognition, *tree;* thirdly, A still lower genus, or rather species, of cognition, *oak-tree;* and, fourthly, The particular specimen. That is the actual inseparable concretion which exists for thought, whatever may be the actual concretion which exists in nature—with that we have nothing to do at present. The Platonic ideas appear to fall short of this—the concrete totality of Knowing. They correct to some extent the contradictory inadvertency of ordinary thinking, which, moving in abstractions, supposes that the abstract particular—some merely particular tree, for instance—is cognisable. It is not more cognisable than the abstract universal, the mere genus "tree," or the mere genus "me." They are only cognisable *together*. But Plato's theory of ideas does not completely correct this popular delusion. More plainly stated, the popular inadvertency is this: in dealing with external objects, we always *apparently* know and think of *less* than we *really* know and think of. The doctrine of ideas was designed by Plato to correct this contradictory thinking, by pointing out the suppressed element, which, although really present in cognition, is, for the most part, overlooked. But the doctrine was incomplete, and

only partially successful. Plato fell short, as has been said, of the *summum genus*, the universal constituent of cognition—that which we are all intimately familiar with, and usually a good deal concerned about—namely, ourselves.

13. In connection with these remarks, this short observation may be made, that the ego having been shown by the epistemological generalisation to be the *summum genus* of cognition, it may also turn out to be the *summum genus* of existence; and that thus far, at least, Knowing and Being are coincident. We should thus obtain, not an abstract and unintelligible universal, like *ens*, but, instead of this, an actual, living, and intelligible universal at the head of all things. We must either suppose this, or fall into the frightful scepticism of holding that the laws of thought bear no sort of analogy to the laws of existence; that there is no parallelism between them; and that there can be no true knowledge, in any quarter, of anything which truly *is*, but only a false knowledge of that which wears the false semblance of Being. All psychology hangs by a thread over the abyss of this hideous hypothesis. A touch might sever the slender chord, and let her drop. But meanwhile she may remain suspended; for the stroke must come from ontology, and not from epistemology, and much has to be done before that stroke can be applied.

Perhaps the ego is the *summum genus* of existence as well as of cognition.

PROP. VII.

The second clause of proposition has had a standing in philosophy from the earliest times.

14. A few remarks must now be made on the second member of the proposition. If philosophers, in general, have been at a loss in regard to the constant and necessary factor of cognition, and unable to name it, they have been quite at home with the other, though less familiar, element, and have experienced no difficulty in declaring what the variable and particular factor, for the most part, is. It is the complement of the phenomena of sense—the whole system of material things. This is the contingent and particular and fluctuating constituent of cognition. Matter is described by the old philosophers, in very plain terms, as that which was always inchoate, but never completed—as that which has no permanency—that which is subject to perpetual vicissitude, and afflicted with a chronic and incurable diarrhœa.

A ground of perplexity.

15. Here, however, there is still as usual some ground for perplexity, and it is occasioned by the old cause, the neglect to distinguish between things as known, and things as existent. When the old philosophers talk of material things as fluctuating and evanescent, do they mean that they are fluctuating creatures of existence, or fluctuating objects of cognition? In other words, is it the existence of them which is evanescent, or is it the knowledge of them which is evanescent? Is the generation and the corruption which they speak of as the characteristic of all material things, to be un-

derstood as a cessation and a restoration of Being, or as a cessation and a restoration of Knowing? PROP. VII.

16. It is necessary to come to a right understanding on this point, because, while the statement may be very readily acquiesced in as an epistemological truth, it must naturally occasion considerable demur if propounded as an ontological tenet. Who can bear to be told, without some preparatory explanation at least, that a mountain is constantly fluctuating, that a forest of oak trees is evanescent, that there is no permanency in a stone, that the chair on which he sits is in a state of perpetual fluidity, and that all things are running away before his eyes? And let it not be supposed that all that such a statement can mean is, that processes of renovation and decay are continually at work over the whole length and breadth of the creation. Such a trivial remark as that fell not within the scope of Greek observation. Speculation had then a higher aim than to inform people that the earth was continually changing, and that not a minute passes over the grassy fields, or the summer woods, or the wintry shore, without altering the structure of every blade and of every leaf, and the position of every particle of sand. The statement, if understood in reference to the existence of things, must be held to mean that matter itself, even in its ultimate atoms, has no persistency, no abiding footing in the universe, Demur as to matter being the fluctuating in existence.

PROP. VII.

either in a compound or in an elementary capacity. But that dogma, thus nakedly presented, could scarcely expect to be welcomed as an article of any man's philosophical creed. It is untenable, because it is unintelligible.

It is certainly thus fluctuating in cognition.

17. On the other hand, if this announcement be understood, not in reference to the *existence* of things, but in reference to our *knowledge* of them, it becomes the truest and most intelligible of propositions. A mountain is a fluctuating and evanescent thing—*in cognition*, because no man is under the necessity of perpetually apprehending it: so is the sea; so is the whole earth, with all its variegated pomp, and the whole heavens, with all their diversified splendour. These things are the vanishing and the transitory in knowledge, because no law declares that they must be unceasingly and everlastingly known.

The old philosophers held it to be both.

18. The question is, In which of these applications did the old philosophers intend their declaration to be received? The fact is, that they intended it to be received in both, and the consequence has been, that it was intelligently accepted in neither. They ran, as has been said, their epistemology into the same mould with their ontology. Their doctrine of Knowing was absorbed in their doctrine of Being; and their expositors have not been at pains to separate the components of that original fusion. Look-

ing more to the ontological than to the epistemological aspects of the ancient systems, they have failed to do justice to the opinions which they contain. The case in hand is a striking exemplification of this. By expounding this speculation touching the perpetual flux of all material things as an ontological dogma, and by leaving it unexplained as an epistemological truth, the commentators on philosophy have done much injury both to the science itself, and to those who were its original cultivators. PROP. VII.

19. They ought to have attended more to the epistemological side of this opinion, and then they would have perceived its merit and its truth. They ought to have understood that when the old philosophers spoke of the incessant generation and corruption to which all material things are subject, what they meant to say was, that these things are, at times, the objects of our cognition, and that, at times, they are not so. If this was not the whole, it was at any rate a very important part, of what the early speculators intended to affirm when they pronounced the entire material universe to be of a fluxional character, and in a constantly perishing condition. Material things are continually dying, and coming alive again, in knowing, if not in being. It is quite possible that the *existence* of these things may catch the infection of fluctuation (if we may so speak) from the fluctuation which is notoriously inherent in the *knowledge* More attention should have been paid to their assertion that it was the fluctuating in cognition.

PROP. VII.

of them, and that the old philosophers meant to affirm that they had caught this infection, and that they were vanishing existences, as well as vanishing cognitions; but if so, that was not their fault—nor is it ours.

Matter as the fluctuating in cognition: explained.

20. But the only point which calls for consideration and settlement in the first section of our science is, whether material things are *known*, and can be known, only as fluctuating and contingent. Whether they *are* so, is no question for the epistemology. In what has been already said, enough perhaps has been advanced to show that they are wholly of this character. The following reiteration may be added.

This is the fluctuation which epistemology attends to.

21. Material things come into, and go out of, our knowledge. Not one of them has the privilege of holding perpetual possession of the mind: a man need not at all times be cognisant even of his own body; and even although it were true that he always was cognisant of this, or of some other material thing, still, inasmuch as reason does not declare that all cognition is impossible unless some material thing be apprehended, none of them are fixed as having a necessary place or an absolute perpetuity in cognition. Not one of them is for ever before us, therefore not one of them is the permanent in cognition: not one of them is everywhere before us, therefore not one of them is the universal in cognition: not

one of them is incapable of being removed from our cognisance, therefore not one of them is the necessary in cognition. And thus the whole material universe is shown without difficulty to be the fluctuating (or non-permanent), the particular (or non-universal), the contingent (or non-necessary), element of knowledge. And thus far, at least, the doctrine advocated by the older systems is both tenable and true. Viewed ontologically, the inchoation and incessant flux ascribed to matter may be an enigma to the student; but viewed epistemologically, it need not puzzle him at all. PROP. VII.

22. Even viewed ontologically, it need not puzzle him much after all that has been said. If every *completed* object of cognition must consist of object *plus* the subject, the object without the subject must be incompleted—that is, inchoate—that is, no possible object of knowledge at all. This is the distressing predicament to which matter *per se* is reduced by the tactics of speculation; and this predicament is described not unaptly by calling it a flux—or as we have depicted it elsewhere, perhaps more philosophically, as a never-ending redemption of nonsense into sense, and a never-ending relapse of sense into nonsense. (For further particulars, see Prop. X. also Prop. IV., Obs. 16–22.) A hint as to its fluctuation in existence.

23. Turn now to the other factor of cognition—

PROP. VII.

The ego as the non-fluctuating in cognition—explained.

the ego, or oneself—and contrast the perpetuity in cognition of this element, compared with the inconstancy of matter. This element does not come into and go out of our knowledge, like a rock, a river, or a tree; it is always there, and always the same. This factor knows no flux, is obnoxious to no vicissitude. It is the permanent in all our knowledge, because it never entirely disappears: it is the universal in all our knowledge, because *we* are in all our knowledge: it is the necessary in all our knowledge, because no cognisance is possible without *this* cognisance. The contrast between the two elements, in point of fixedness and fluctuation, is manifest and decided.

Seventh counter-proposition.

24. *Seventh counter-proposition.*—"The ego (or mind) is known as a particular or special cognition, and not as the element common to all cognitions—in other words, our cognition of ourselves is a mere particular cognition, just as our cognitions of material things are mere particular cognitions. Thus we have a number of particular cognitions. One of these is the knowledge of self. This cognition is distinguished from the others, as they are reciprocally distinguished from each other—that is, it is distinguished from them, not by its universality, but by its particularity—not by the circumstance that it is the point of identity in all our cognitions, but by the circumstance that it is itself a special and completed cognition. The unity in our cognitions (that is, their reduction to a

class) is effected, not by the observation that they are *our* cognitions, but simply by the observation that they are *cognitions*; in other words, they are formed into a genus, not from their containing and presenting the common and unchangeable element which we call self, but from some other cause which the counter-proposition—finds it difficult, indeed impossible, even to name." PROP. VII.

25. This counter-proposition expresses, more explicitly than has yet been done, the inadvertency of ordinary thinking in regard to the cognition or conception of oneself. Its substance may be readily understood from the following plain illustration: I have the cognition of a book—this is, in the estimation of my ordinary thinking, a particular and completed cognition. I have the cognition of a tree—that too, in the estimation of my ordinary thinking, is a particular and completed cognition, distinct altogether from the first. Again, I have the cognition of myself—this also, in the estimation of my ordinary thinking, is a particular and completed cognition, distinct from the other two, just as they are distinct from each other. There cannot be a doubt that this, in our ordinary moods, is the way in which we reckon up the relation which subsists between ourselves and surrounding things. Expresses the contradictory inadvertency of ordinary thinking: illustration.

26. But this reckoning is at variance both with

PROP. VII.

Corrective illustration.

fact and with reason. It is contradictory; it implies that there can be a knowledge of the particular without a knowledge of the universal, a knowledge of things without a knowledge of *me*. It never really and truly takes place; it only *appears* to take place. The true reckoning is this: the book and "I" together constitute a distinct and completed cognition. The tree and "I" together constitute another distinct and completed cognition. In short, whatever the things or complexus of things may be, it is always they and "I" together which make up the cognition; but such a cognition never is and never can be particular; it is always a synthesis of the particular (the thing, or rather element, whatever it may be) and the universal (the me.) When I observe a book, I also observe myself; when I observe a tree, I also observe myself; when I think of Julius Cæsar, I also take note of myself; and so on (see Prop. II., Obs. 4.) Is not this consideration sufficient to prove, and to make perfectly intelligible, the statement that "self" is the common element, the "universal" in all cognition, and that, therefore, it cannot by any possibility have a *particular* cognition corresponding to it, or be known as a particular, as this counter-proposition, the exponent of our inadvertent thinking, maintains.

27. Psychology must be understood to adopt the counter-proposition in all its latitude. Counter-proposition VII. is an inevitable consequent of Coun-

ter-proposition VI., in which all our cognitions are stated to be, in the first instance at least, particular. PROP. VII.

How the unity in our cognitions is obtained—how they are reduced to the genus called cognition—is a point which psychology has left altogether unexplained. Psychology adopts Counter-proposition VII. It is by looking to the resemblances of things, says psychology, and by giving a name to that resemblance, that we reduce things to a genus, or form a class. Very well; one might have expected that psychology would also have told us that it was by looking to the resemblance among cognitions, and by giving a name to that resemblance, that we were able to reduce cognitions to a class; and further, that the point of resemblance to which the name was given was no other, and could be no other—when the *whole* of our cognitions were taken into account—than the "me," the self of each individual knower. But no; psychology tells us nothing of this kind—teaches no such doctrine—teaches the very reverse. She holds that the "me" is a special cognition distinguished numerically from our other cognitions, just as they are numerically distinct from one another. The common element, in virtue of which our cognitions constitute a class, has obtained no expression in all the deliverances of psychology.

28. The most memorable consequence of this blundering procedure, on the part of psychology, is that it has caused her to miss the *only* argument

PROP. VII.

And thereby loses hold of the only argument for immateriality.

which has any degree of force or reason in favour of the immateriality of the ego, mind, subject, or thinking principle. The present and the preceding proposition afford the sole premises from which that conclusion can be deduced; and therefore psychology, having virtually denied both of these premises, is unable to adduce any valid, or even intelligible, ground in support of her opinion when she advocates the immateriality of the mind. Here the spiritualist is at fault quite as much as the materialist, in so far as reasoning is concerned, as shall be shown in the next proposition and its appendages.

PROPOSITION VIII.

THE EGO IN COGNITION.

The ego cannot be known to be material—that is to say, there is a necessary law of reason which prevents it from being apprehended by the senses.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE ego is known as that which is common to all cognitions, and matter is known as that which is peculiar to some cognitions (Prop. VII.) But that which is known as common to all cognitions cannot be known as that which is peculiar to some cognitions, without supposing that a thing can be known to be different from what it is known to be,—which supposition is a violation of the law of contradiction (*see* Introduction, § 28). Therefore the ego cannot be known to be material, &c.

Or, again: Matter, in its various forms, is known as the changeable, contingent, and particular element

PROP. VIII.

of cognition (Prop. VII.) Therefore, if the ego could be known to be material, it would be known as the changeable, contingent, and particular element of cognition. But the ego is known as the unchangeable, necessary, and universal element of cognition (Prop. VII.) Therefore the ego cannot be known to be material, &c.

Or, again: Matter, in its various forms, is known as the particular element of cognition. If, therefore, the ego could be known to be material as well as the bodies which it knows, it would be known as some form of the particular element of cognition; in which case a cognition would be formed, consisting entirely of the particular constituent of knowledge: (for, of course, no variety in the particular element can ever make it other than particular.) But this supposition contradicts Proposition VI., which declares that every cognition must contain a common or universal, as well as a particular and peculiar constituent. Therefore the ego cannot be known to be material.

Or, once more: The universal element of cognition is known as such, precisely because it is known as *not* the particular element; and conversely the particular element is known as such, precisely because it is known as *not* the universal element. Hence the ego, which is known as the universal element, and matter, which is known as the particular element, cannot, either of them, be known to

be the other of them: and therefore the ego cannot be known to be material—or, in other words, that part of every object of cognition which is usually called the subject or oneself, cannot be known to be of the same nature with that part of every object of cognition which is usually called the object. PROP. VIII.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. Observe, this proposition does not demonstrate that the mind cannot *be* material; it only proves that it cannot *be known* to be such. Although in the "Observations and Explanations" appended to the propositions in the first section of our science, remarks, and even conclusions, of an ontological character may be occasionally introduced, the reader is again requested to bear in mind that all that is strictly proved, or attempted to be proved, in the demonstrations, is what *is to be known* or *not to be known*—not what *is*, or *is not*. A caveat.

2. This demonstration yields as its result this important law of knowledge, that intelligence, of whatever order it may be, cannot, upon any terms, know itself to be material. Show a man to himself as a material thing; take out of his brain his pineal gland, or whatever else you please, and, presenting it to him on a plate,* say, *That*, sir, is you, your Important law of knowledge.

* *See* SOUTHEY'S *Omniana*, vol. ii. p. 2.

PROP. VIII.

ego: the exhibition (supposing it to be possible) would instantly prove that the self so shown was not himself; because the man would say,—I know myself along with that material thing; which words would prove that he was cognisant of something over and above the mere material thing, and would prove, moreover, that this additional element (himself) was known by him as the universal constituent of that, and of all his cognitions; while the element before him, the pineal gland, or whatever else it might be, was known by him as the particular constituent merely of that cognition: so that to suppose him to know it to be *himself* would be to suppose him to know that one part of his cognition was another part of his cognition—in other words, that the universal part was the particular part, which, of course, is absurd, and a violation of the first law of reason, which declares that we must know a thing to be what we know it to be.

Materiality and immateriality. Eighth counter-proposition.

3. It is at this point that the controversies respecting the materiality and the immateriality of the thinking principle take off from the main trunk of the speculative tree. The eighth counter-proposition, embodying the inadvertent result of ordinary thinking, and embodying also the doctrine of our popular psychologies, whether these psychologies favour, as some of them do, the materiality, or, as others of them do, the immateriality of the mind, is

this—*Eighth counter-proposition:* "The ego might possibly be known to be material. There is no necessary law of reason which prevents it from being apprehended by the senses." PROP. VIII.

4. This counter-proposition is the common property both of the materialistic and of the spiritual psychologists. The materialist holds that nothing except matter is known: hence he holds that, if the ego or mind is known at all, it is known as material. The only distinction which he acknowledges between mind and matter is, that the one is matter knowing, and the other matter known. Mind is supposed to be either itself a highly-refined species of matter, or else a property of certain kinds or combinations of matter—a mere result of physical organisation. The brain produces intelligence, just as the stomach, or rather some part of the nervous apparatus, produces hunger. At any rate, according to the materialist, there is no necessary law of reason which prevents the mind from being known as matter, or as some sort of dependency on matter. The spiritualist, again, though he denies, as a question of fact, that the mind is known to be material, does not deny this as a question of possibility. His denial does not amount to the assertion, much less to the proof, of Proposition VIII. It is merely a dissuasive, intimating that it is better, on the whole, to suppose that the mind is not material. A critical remark or

Eighth counter-proposition the common property of materialist and spiritualist.

PROP. VIII.

two may be offered both on the materialistic and the spiritualistic conception of mind.

Early conception of mind as material. Ghosts, *clairvoyance*, spirit-rapping.

5. Both parties are in error at the outset. They undertake to declare what the mind *is*, before they have determined what it *is known* as. The early physiologists gave out that the mind was some kind of *aura* or finer breath, some highly attenuated species of matter; but they certainly never succeeded in showing that it was known as this. That very important point was prejudged. Their hypothesis was founded upon analogy. Matter was patent to universal observation. All things were seen to be material. Man's organism was material,—why should not his mind, his most intimate self, follow the same analogy, and be material too? Hence its materiality was assumed. The word, indeed, by which the thinking principle is designated in all languages bears evidence to the inveteracy of the superstition that the conception of mind might be formed by conceiving a material substance of extreme fineness and tenuity. Many circumstances have conspired to keep this fanaticism in life. The supposed visibility of ghosts helps it on considerably; and it is still further reinforced by some of the fashionable deliraments of the day, such as *clairvoyance* and (even A.D 1854, *credite posteri!*) spirit-rapping. These, however, are not to be set down—at least so it is to be hoped—among the normal and catholic supersti-

tions incident to humanity. They are much worse than the worst form of the doctrine of materiality. These aberrations betoken a perverse and prurient play of the abnormal fancy—groping for the very holy of holies in kennels running with the most senseless and god-abandoned abominations. Our natural superstitions are bad enough; but thus to make a systematic business of fatuity, imposture, and profanity, and to imagine, all the while, that we are touching on the precincts of God's spiritual kingdom, is unspeakably shocking. The horror and disgrace of such proceedings were never even approached in the darkest days of heathendom and idolatry. Ye who make shattered nerves and depraved sensations the interpreters of truth, the keys which shall unlock the gates of heaven, and open the secrets of futurity—ye who inaugurate disease as the prophet of all wisdom, thus making sin, death, and the devil, the lords paramount of creation—have ye bethought yourselves of the backward and downward course which ye are running into the pit of the bestial and the abhorred? Oh, ye miserable mystics! when will ye know that all God's truths and all man's blessings lie in the broad health, in the trodden ways, and in the laughing sunshine of the universe, and that all intellect, all genius, is merely the power of seeing wonders in common things!

PROP. VIII.

6. The materialistic conception of mind, or the

PROP. VIII.

Conception of mind as material substance dismissed.

ego, as a fine or subtle species of matter is obviously no conception of it at all. Not in this way is the idea of intelligence to be approached. The conception of the most gossamery and ghostlike tissue that ever floated in the dreams of fancy, is not one whit nearer to the conception of spirit than is the conception of the most solid lead that ever acted as ballast to a seventy-four-gun ship. The mind of man is certainly adamant, just as much as it is ether. This conception, therefore, may be dismissed as unworthy of further consideration.

Conception of mind as result of organisation: phrenology.

7. The other form of materialism—that which pronounces the mind to be the result of physical organisation, (phrenology, in short)—is more plausible, and more difficult to overcome. The particles of matter assume a certain configuration or arrangement, called the human brain, and intelligence is manifested in consequence, the degrees of which are found generally to be in proportion to the size of the organ, and the depth and number of its convolutions. Why, asks the materialist, ought this plain fact to cause more astonishment, or meet with less acquiescence, than any other effect resulting from the various combinations of matter? All that we know of causation is uniform sequence. When certain conditions concur, certain results follow. When the material conditions requisite to the development of mind are fulfilled, why should not intelligence ensue? They *are* fulfilled

when matter takes that form which we term a human organisation, and intellect is put forth accordingly. Mind, or the ego, is thus made a result contingent on certain material combinations. It is subordinated to the body; it holds its place by a very precarious tenure, and has no absolutely independent status. PROP. VIII.

8. Is there any weapon in the armoury of spiritualism by which this disagreeable conclusion can be effectually rebutted? There is not one, as spiritualism is at present provided. In vain does the spiritualist found an argument for the existence of a separate immaterial* substance on the alleged incompatibility of the intellectual and the physical phenomena to coinhere in the same substratum. Materiality may very well stand the brunt of that unshotted broadside. This mild artifice can scarcely expect to be treated as a serious observation. Such an hypothesis cannot be meant in earnest. Who is to dictate to nature—what phenomena or qualities can inhere in what substances—what effects may result from what causes? Why should not thought be a property or result of matter, just as well as extension, or hardness, or weight, or digestion, or electricity? The psychologist must show that this cannot be the

The spiritualist's conception of mind is as null as the materialist's.

* The word "substance" is here used in the vulgar and erroneous sense of "substratum of qualities." Its true definition and meaning are given in Propositions XVI. XVII.

PROP. VIII.

case, either because the supposition contradicts reason, or because it contradicts experience. If it contradicts reason, let him point out the contradiction: if it contradicts experience, let him show that it does so. He can do neither: he never attempts to do either; and therefore he does not prove, he merely asserts. But the materialist also asserts, and with better reason, in so far as probabilities and plausibilities are concerned. Matter is already in the field as an acknowledged entity—this both parties admit. Mind, considered as an independent entity, is not so clearly and unmistakably in the field. Therefore, on the principle that entities are not to be multiplied without necessity, the defender of immaterialism is not entitled to postulate an unknown basis for the intellectual phenomena, and an unknown cause for the intellectual effects, so long as it is *possible* to refer them to the known basis, or to account for them by the known cause, already in existence. Now this possibility has never been disproved on necessary grounds of reason.

Both parties hold mind to be particular.

9. The fundamental disturbance which oversets the schemes, both of the materialist and of the spiritualist, and prevents either of them from attaining to any distinct conception of the mind, is to be found, as has been said, in the circumstance that they attempted to declare what it was before they had ascertained what it was known as. They undertook

to settle how or in what capacity it existed, before they had settled how or in what capacity it was known. And hence, being imbued with the opinion that all existence is particular, they made it their aim to determine, or at least to announce, what particular kind or character of existence the mind, or ego, had. The materialist held, as has been said, that it was either some peculiar form of matter, or some peculiar result of material combinations. The immaterialist held that it was at bottom a particular sort of substance different from matter, and therefore to be called immaterial. Differing as they did, they both agreed in holding it to be *something particular*. PROP. VIII.

10. Whether all existence is particular, and whether the ego *is* something particular (be it material, or be it immaterial), is a question with which the epistemology has no concern. This section of the science decides only what the ego is known, and not known, as; and it declares (as it has already declared in Prop. VII.) in emphatic terms, that the ego or mind is not known as any *particular* thing, either material or immaterial, but is known only as a *universal*, that is, as the element common to all cognition, and not peculiar to any. The element which every cognition presents, and must present, can have no particularity attaching to it, except the characteristic of absolute universality. To attempt to conceive it as some particular thing, by affixing It is known only as the universal.

PROP. VIII.

to it some peculiar or distinctive mark, would be to reduce it from universality to particularity—in other words, would be to destroy the conception of mind in the very act of forming it.

The materialist's error consists in his holding mind to be *particular*.

11. This observation brings us to close quarters with the fundamental error both of the materialist and the spiritualist. The fundamental error of the materialist does not consist in his holding the mind, or ego, to be a material substance or a material result. That is no doubt wrong; but the *feeding* or mother blunder consists in his supposing that it is a *particular* substance or a *particular* result. It is only through his occupation of the latter position that the materialist is able to maintain with any show of meaning that the mind is some sort of matter, or some sort of dependency on organisation. Whether it *is* this—whether it be any particular thing or particular dependency—is, as we have said, not the question. It is certain that it cannot be known as such. It can be known only as the universal part, in contradistinction to the particular part, of every cognition. It therefore can be conceived only as this: and every attempt to conceive it as some form of matter, or as some result of matter, must necessarily be a failure, and must terminate in no conception of it at all. A moderate degree of reflection may convince any one that he can, and does, entertain the conception of *himself* only as that which is the universal and identical

part of all his conceptions and cognitions, and that he cannot form any idea of himself except as this. PROP. VIII.

12. The error of the spiritualist is of precisely the same character. He holds the ego, or mind, to be an immaterial substance. This also is wrong, as the immaterialist puts it; because he rests this statement on the assumption that the ego is a *particular* substance. At any rate, it is a mere expenditure of words to which no meaning can be attached. The spiritualist is a torment to mankind fully as much as the materialist, because, undertaking to teach us what the mind *is*, he leaves us totally in the dark as to what it *is known* as; and the consequence is, that he fails to teach us what it is, and merely palms off upon us certain crude fancies which enjoy the credit of being somewhat more reputable and orthodox than the tenets of his opponent. There can be no conception of the mind as a particular immaterial substance, any more than there can be a conception of it as a particular material substance; because, as has been shown, the only conception of it which is possible is the conception of it as the universal and unchangeable factor in all our cognitions,—whether these cognitions contain, as their particular factor, phenomena which are material, or phenomena which are immaterial. If the word immaterial be used as a synonym for universal, it would be quite right to say that the ego was immaterial; but if it be used to

The spiritualist's error consists in his holding mind to be *particular*.

PROP. VIII.

designate anything particular, in that case the ego is certainly no more immaterial than it is material. But it is in the latter acceptation that the psychologist employs the term; and hence he is in error. I am not this table, or my own body, or any particular material thing that can be presented to me; but just as little am I any particular thought, or feeling, that may occur to me. When I think of the death of Julius Cæsar, I am not that immaterial thought. When I entertain the feeling of resentment, I am not the resentment which I entertain. I am not the anger or the pain which I experience, any more than I am the chair or the table which I perceive. Caliban, indeed, (in *The Tempest*), declares that he *is* "a cramp"—an incarnate rheumatism; but this is a flight of speech—a hyperbole rather poetical than philosophical. Whether a particular material thing or a particular immaterial thought is before me, "I" am not the *total* cognition which I may be dealing with. I am simply known to myself as the universal *part* of that, and of all my other cognitions.

The two errors summed up.

13. The error, then, of the materialist consists in the supposition that the mind or self is a *particular* material thing, or a *particular* development from material conditions. The error of the immaterialist consists in the supposition that the mind or self is a *particular* immaterial thing. Such statements are mere hypotheses—indeed, mere words, to which no

conception is attached. The doom of both is settled by the remark, that the ego cannot be known as a *particular* thing at all, but only as the One Known in All Known. PROP. VIII.

14. In conclusion, it is humbly submitted that this eighth proposition, and its demonstration, constitute the *only* proof by which the true immateriality of the mind can be rationally established. The necessity of Propositions VII. and VI., as supplying the only premises for such a conclusion, must also, it is conceived, be now apparent. These three propositions are the institutes to which every controversy about the materiality or immateriality of the mind must be referred for settlement. A conception of the mind as immaterial can only be attained by, first of all, conceiving it as that which is the universal part, as contradistinguished from all that is the particular part, of every cognition. Hence the necessity of Proposition VII., which fixes the ego as the universal part of all, and matter, in its various forms, as the particular part of some, cognitions. But to establish Proposition VII. it was necessary to show that there *was* a universal and a particular part in all cognition. Hence the necessity of Proposition VI., in which that truth is established. These data having been fixed, the conclusion can be logically drawn, as the following short recapitulation will show: *First*, Every cognition contains a

Recapitulation of the institutional proof of immateriality.

PROP. VIII.

universal part (the same in each), and also a particular part (different in each)—Proposition VI. *Second*, The ego is the universal part (the same in each); matter, in its various forms, is the particular part (different in each)—Proposition VII. *Third*, Therefore the ego, being the universal part, cannot be the particular part of cognition; and not being the particular part, it cannot be matter, because matter *is* the particular part. Therefore the ego or mind cannot be material, or rather cannot be known as such (Prop. VIII.); for it is only as a question of knowing that this subject is at present under consideration. If the word immateriality be understood, as it very well may, in the sense of universality, we may assert, with perfect truth and propriety, and as a known and proved fact, the immateriality of the mind, ego, or thinking principle. Taken with this explanation, the doctrine advocated in these Institutes coincides with the opinion of the spiritualists. But the instant any attempt is made to describe the mind, or oneself, as a particular immaterial substance, distinct from another particular kind of substance called matter, these Institutes part company with the psychology of immaterialism, and disclaim having anything in common with so unthinkable a scheme. Certain difficulties to which the institutional settlement of the question, and the institutional construction of the conception, of immateriality may seem to give rise, shall be explained away in the next article.

PROPOSITION IX.

THE EGO PER SE.

The ego, or self, or mind, *per se*, is, of necessity, absolutely unknowable. *By itself*—that is, in a purely indeterminate state, or separated from all things, and divested of all thoughts—it is no possible object of cognition. It can know itself only in some particular state, or in union with some non-ego; that is, with some element contradistinguished from itself.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE ego is the element common to all cognition—the universal constituent of knowledge, (Proposition VII.) But every cognition must contain a particular or peculiar, as well as a common or universal, part, and there can be no knowledge of either of these

PROP. IX.

parts by itself, or prescinded from the other part, (Proposition VI.) Therefore there can be no knowledge of the ego, or self, or mind, *per se*, or in a purely indeterminate state, or separated from all things, and divested of all thoughts. It can know itself only in some particular state, or in union with some non-ego; that is, with some element contradistinguished from itself.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

Purport of this proposition in relation to Proposition I.

1. Just as Proposition I. declares that the mind can be cognisant of something else only when it knows itself, so this proposition affirms that it can know itself only when it is cognisant of something else. This statement may appear to give rise to several objections and difficulties which must be obviated and explained.

An objection started.

2. *First*, In laying down the cognisance of something different from self as the condition of the mind's self-consciousness, does not this proposition appear to introduce a new primary condition of knowledge, in addition to that which was announced in Proposition I. as the one fundamental law? If the mind must know itself, as Proposition I. declares, in order to know anything else; and if, conversely, it must know something else in order to know itself, (as this proposition imports), must not these two laws

stand upon an equal footing, and consequently must there not be some mistake or confusion in the statement which declares that the one of them (that laid down in Proposition I.) is the more fundamental and essential of the two? PROP. IX.

3. There is no mistake; and the apparent confusion is easily cleared up. The law laid down in Prop. I. as the primary condition of knowledge has an undoubted title to precedence—for this reason, that it *names* the one thing (to wit, self) which must be known in order to bring about a cognisance of any other thing; whereas the proposition which announces (as Prop. IX. does) that something else must be known in order to bring about a cognisance of self, cannot name what that something else is. This cannot be named in any proposition, because, as has been said, the varieties of the particular element are contingent, indefinite, and inexhaustible. And therefore, although the truth set forth in Prop. IX. is equally certain with that stated in Prop. I., the law of knowledge announced in the latter proposition is entitled to the pre-eminence which has been assigned to it. If a man must know himself, as the condition of his knowing any one, or any number, of ten million things, surely that law would take rank before the converse law, which might declare with equal truth that he must know some (indefinite) one, or more, of these ten million things as the con- Objection obviated.

PROP. IX.

dition of his knowing himself. Besides, the first question of philosophy is, What is the one thing, or rather element, which must be known in order that anything may be known,—what is the one thing known along with all other things? The answer, as we have seen, is—*self*. But had the question been, What is the one thing which must be known in order that self may be known—what is the other thing known along with self?—the question would have been aimless and unanswerable, because there is no one thing which can be mentioned, or conceived, which *must* be known in all knowing of oneself. These reasons may be sufficient to explain the relation which subsists between this proposition and Proposition I., and to show that the law stated in the latter has an undoubted right to the priority which has been accorded to it.

Another objection obviated.

4. A *second* difficulty may be started. The ego must know itself whenever it knows anything material. Does the converse follow—must it know something material whenever it knows itself? No—that is by no means necessary. It must know something particular,—it must know itself in some determinate condition, whenever it has any sort of cognisance, but the particular element need not be material—the determinate state need not be the apprehension of any material thing. This objection was sufficiently guarded against under Proposition

VII., (Obs. 2), to which reference is made in order to avoid repetition. The *caveat* there introduced is quite sufficient to obviate any charge of materialism which might be brought against this system, on the ground that it makes our cognisance of ourselves to depend on our cognisance of matter. The system steers completely clear of that objection, although it holds unequivocally that our cognisance of self is dependent on our cognisance of something particular, or of ourselves in some determinate state, and that this is a law binding on intelligence universally. PROP. IX.

5. In his *Treatise of Human Nature*, book i. part iv. sec. vi., David Hume says: "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other of heat, cold, light, or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch myself at any time without a perception"—that is, unmodified in any way whatever. This is undoubtedly true. It is what Proposition IX. maintains. But Hume does not stop here; he goes on to say that he always catches his perceptions *without any self*. "I never can observe," says he, "anything *but* the perception"—in other words, I always observe that the perceptions *are not mine*, and do not belong to any one! This is perhaps the hardiest assertion ever hazarded in philosophy. Not content with saying that a man can never apprehend himself in a purely indeterminate condition, he affirms that David Hume outgoes this proposition.

PROP. IX.

a man can never apprehend himself *at all*. This is certainly carrying the doctrine of determinate states, mental modifications, or particular cognitions, to an extreme. Many philosophers, however, to whom the speculations of Hume were as wormwood, have taught the same doctrine, only in terms somewhat more dubious and inexplicit.

What this proposition contends for.

6. All that this proposition contends for is, that intelligence can be cognisant of itself only when it knows itself in some determinate state, whatever that state may be, or by whatever means it may be brought about. This doctrine is a necessary truth of reason. To suppose that any intelligence can know itself in no particular state, is contradictory; for this would be equivalent to supposing that it could know itself in no state at all, which again would be equivalent to the supposition that it could know itself without knowing itself.

The mind must always know itself in, but not as, some determinate condition.

7. When it is said, however, that the ego can know itself only *in* or *along with* some particular modification, this position must be carefully distinguished from the assertion that it can know itself *as* that particular modification. This assertion would be quite as contradictory as the other—quite as irrational as the supposition that it could know itself in no determinate state. Because if the ego could know itself *as* any one particular state, it could

never know itself *in* any other particular state. It would be foreclosed against all variation of knowledge or of thought; and thus its intelligent nature would be annihilated. In fact, this opinion would be equivalent to the contradictory supposition that the particular could be known without the universal, the determinate state without the ego with whom the state was associated. Therefore the ego, although it can be cognisant of itself only in or along with some determinate modification, never knows, and never can know, itself as any, or as all, of these modifications. It can only know itself as *not* any of them—in other words, as the universal which stands unchanged and unabsorbed amid all the fluctuating determinations or diversified particulars, whether things or thoughts, of which it may be cognisant. Through an inattention to this distinction between the knowledge of ourselves *in* some particular state, and the knowledge of ourselves *as* that particular state, Hume was led into the monstrous paradox noticed above; and other philosophers (especially Dr Brown) have run their systems aground, and have foundered on the rocks of ambiguity, if not of positive error, in consequence of the same inattention. The dominant doctrine in psychology is that the mind is cognisant *only* of the variable determinations of which it is the subject; and that it is cognisant of itself *as* these.

PROP. IX.

8. *Ninth Counter-proposition.*—"The ego *per se* is

PROP. IX.

Ninth counter-proposition.

not absolutely, and necessarily, and universally unknowable. *We*, indeed, are unable, on account of the imperfection of our faculties, to know ourselves in a purely indeterminate state. We are ignorant of the *essence* of the mind; but other intelligences may not be subject to this restriction, but may be able to know themselves *per se*."

Its twofold error.

9. The opinion expressed in this counter-proposition, if not an express article of ordinary thinking, has at any rate been formally adopted and largely insisted on by psychology. But here, again, as in the case of matter *per se*, psychology is in error in attributing our inability to know ourselves *per se* to a wrong cause. The psychological blunder is twofold. First, it overlooks a sovereign law binding upon all reason—viz., that no intelligence can apprehend itself in a state of pure indetermination; and, secondly, it refers *our* inability to perform this feat, not to that supreme and necessary law, but to some special limitation in our faculties of cognition. These may be imperfect enough. But the disability in question (if that be a disability which is one of the prime characteristics of intelligence, considered simply as intelligence) is certainly not due to the cause to which psychology refers it. It is due to the law to which expression was given in Proposition VI., namely, that the universal ground or common constituent of all know-

ledge cannot be apprehended by itself, but only in synthesis with some particular. That law is a necessary truth of reason; and the law expressed in the present proposition is merely one of its inevitable corollaries. PROP. IX.

10. At this place it is proper to take some notice of those random skirmishes or stray shots—they can scarcely be called controversies or discussions—which occasionally show themselves in the history of speculation touching what is called the "essence" of the mind. And, first of all, it is important to remark the change of meaning which this word has undergone in its transmission from the ancient to the modern schools of philosophy. Formerly the word "essence" (οὐσία) meant that part or characteristic of anything which threw an intellectual illumination over all the rest of it. It was the point of light, the main peculiarity observable in whatever was presented to the mind. It signified the quality or feature of a thing which made it what it was, and enabled the thing or things in question to be distinguished from all other things. It was a synonym for the superlatively comprehensible, the superlatively cogitable. Nowadays it means exactly the reverse. It signifies that part of a thing which carries no light itself, and on which no light can be thrown. The "essence" is the point of darkness, the assumed element in all things which is inacces- History of word "essence." Its meaning reversed by moderns.

PROP. IX.

sible to thought or observation. It is a synonym for the superlatively incomprehensible, the superlatively incogitable. Other words, as shall be shown hereafter, have been tampered with in the same way.

Consequence of this reversal—injustice to the old philosophers.

11. No great mischief can ensue from the reversal of the meaning of a philosophical term, provided those who employ it in its modern signification are aware of the sense in which it was formerly used, and are careful to record the distinction between the two acceptations. No precaution of this kind has been observed in the case of the word "essence." The ancients are supposed by our psychologists to have understood the term in the sense in which they understand it; and hence the charge has gone forth against them that they prosecuted their inquiries into matters which are inaccessible to the faculties of man and hopelessly incomprehensible. Never was there a more unfounded charge. They prosecuted their researches, we are told, into the essence of things; and this, we are assured by a wiser generation of thinkers, lies beyond the limits of human cognition. What *you* choose to call the essence of things may be of this character, but not what *they* called the essence of things. With the old philosophers the essence of things was precisely that part of them of which a clear conception could be formed: with you of the modern school it is precisely that part of them of which there can be no conception. Whether

anything is gained by thus changing the meaning of words, is another question; but certainly it is rather hard treatment dealt out to the early speculators, first to have the meaning of their language reversed by modern psychology, and then to be knocked on the head for carrying on inquiries which are absurd under the new signification, but not at all absurd under the old one.

12. Considered, however, even as a matter of nomenclature, the change is to be deprecated. The reversal has resulted in nothing but confusion, and the propagation of unsound metaphysical doctrine. The *essence* of the mind, and the mind *per se*, are nowadays held to be identical; and these terms are employed by psychology to express some occult basis or unknown condition of the mind. That the mind *per se* is absolutely inconceivable (although for a reason very different from that alleged by psychology) is undoubted. But the essence of the mind is, of all things, the most comprehensible. The essence of the mind is simply the *knowledge which it has of itself*, along with all that it is cognisant of. Whatever makes a thing to be what it is, is properly called its essence. Self-consciousness, therefore, is the essence of the mind, because it is in virtue of self-consciousness that the mind is the mind—that a man is himself. Deprive him of this characteristic, this fundamental attribute, and he ceases to be an intel-

Confusion and error to which the reversal has led.

PROP. IX.

ligence. He loses his essence. Restore this, and his intelligent character returns. Perhaps these remarks may assist in restoring to the word "essence" its right signification, and in dissipating the psychological hallucination, that the essence of the mind is inconceivable.

This proposition reduces the ego *per se* to a contradiction.

13. It is obvious that this proposition reduces the ego *per se* to a contradiction—a thing not to be known on any terms by any intelligence—just as Proposition IV. reduced matter *per se* to the condition of a contradiction. But there is this difference between the two contradictories, that the ego carries within itself the power by which the contradiction may be overcome, and itself redeemed into the region of the cogitable, out of the region of the contradictory. It has a power of self-determination, which is no other than the Will. Matter *per se*, on the other hand, has to look to the ego for the elimination of the contradiction by which it is spell-bound. This is a momentous difference, and gives the contradictory ego *per se* an infinite superiority over the contradictory material universe *per se*. The importance of reducing the ego *per se* to a contradiction will be apparent in the ontology.

14. The words "ego," "me," or "self," have been repeatedly used in the course of these discussions, because, awkward and barbarous though they

be, they are of a less hypothetical character than any other terms which can be employed to express what is intended. Whatever else a man may be, he is, at any rate—himself. He understands what he means when he utters the word "I," and, therefore, when such terms as "mind," or "subject," or "intelligence," are employed in these pages, they are to be regarded as strictly synonymous with this less ambiguous, though egotistical monosyllable.

PROP. IX.

Why the word ego is used in these discussions.

15. The synthesis of the ego (which is the universal element of all cognition), and the things whatever they may be, or the mental states whatever they may be (which are the particular element of all cognition), is properly called "the individual." This is what Leibnitz expresses by the word "monad"—that is, the combination of the singular and the universal, or the soul and its presentations wrapt up together, and constituting the independent totality known by each individual intelligence,—the intelligence being a surd without something of which it is intelligent, and this something being a surd without the intelligence which apprehends it. In other words, the individual, or monad, is the universe constituted by oneself, with the addition of the things or thoughts with which oneself is associated.

The individual or monad.

16. Finally, lest any dissatisfaction should be felt on the two following points, a word of explanation

PROP. IX.

An objection obviated.

may be appended. *First*, It may be alleged that the demonstration of Proposition VIII. merely proves that the ego must be known as the non-material *element* of cognition, but does not prove that it is known as a completed and non-material *existence*; and that this conclusion, therefore, does not appear to be altogether satisfactory. The answer is, that the ego having been proved to be the universal or non-material element of all cognition, and matter having been proved to be that which (although it is frequently the other element) does not, *of necessity*, enter into the composition of cognition at all, the conclusion is that the ego may, at any time, exist in combination with such peculiar elements of cognition (different from the material) as Providence may be pleased to associate it with, or as its own inherent powers may be competent to develop. The ego can *never* be known as a completed non-material existence, because it can be known only as the universal element of all cognition; but this universal element by itself—that is, dissociated from every particular element—is absolutely unknowable; and, therefore, if the reader expects a proof of the existence of himself as a completed immaterial entity, irrespective of his association with all particular things, and all determinate states, he must for ever be disappointed: at least he can obtain no redress on this point at the hands of speculation; nor does any redress appear to be at all needed.

17. *Secondly*, It may be said that the doctrine of the absolute unknowableness of the ego *per se*, and its reduction to a contradiction when in this predicament, may have the effect of depriving the mind of its fundamental substantiality; and that, according to this view, it must be little better than a nonentity when in a state of absolute indetermination. The answer is, Who cares although the doctrine has this effect? Who cares to exist, if he does not exist in some particular way, or in some determinate condition, or in association with something or other? To find the value of an existence of which there is, and can be, no cognisance, is a problem in metaphysical arithmetic which may be left to the psychologists to solve. In the opinion of speculation, such an existence is of no value at all. It seems quite sufficient for every reasonable wish that a man's substantial existence should always consist of himself in some determinate condition, or of himself along with something else. All uneasiness as to the existence of the mind, in so far as it is absolutely unknown, or in so far as it is without thoughts or things present to it, is very much out of place. These reflections may, perhaps, have the effect of correcting this prevalent, but misdirected, solicitude. This system, assuredly, opens up a much brighter vista for the futurity of the mind than any which psychology can disclose; and places its imperishable nature on a much surer basis than any which psychology can establish.

PROP. IX.

Another objection obviated.

PROPOSITION X.

SENSE AND INTELLECT.

Mere objects of sense can never be objects of cognition; in other words, whatever has a place in the intellect (whatever is known) must contain an element which has had no place in the senses; or, otherwise expressed, the senses, by themselves, are not competent to place any knowable or intelligible thing before the mind. They are faculties of nonsense, and can present to the mind only the nonsensical or contradictory.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE ego must form a part of every object of cognition (Props. I. II. III.) But the ego cannot be apprehended by the senses; that is, cannot be known as material (Prop. VIII.) Therefore, *mere* objects of sense can never be objects of cognition; in other words, &c.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

PROP. X.

Comment on *data* of proof of this proposition.

1. The truth of this proposition, although dimly surmised and vaguely contended for in the higher schools of speculation, has never been *proved* until now. Two premises were required for its proof: it was requisite to show, first, that some one thing, or rather element, must be known along with all the presentations of sense; and, secondly, that this thing, or element, could not be known as material. These, and only these, are competent data of proof in this case. But no system hitherto propounded has ever distinctly shown *what* this one thing or element is, or even *that* there is any such thing or element; much less has any previous system ever proved that this element could not be known to be material. The data of proof, therefore, were wanting in all previous systems—and, consequently, this proposition, to whatever extent, or in whatever form, it may have been enunciated, has until now remained undemonstrated. Neither of the two premises would, without the other, have been of any avail in proving it. We might show that self must be known along with all the presentations of sense; but if self could be known as material, or as a presentation of sense, no ground would be afforded for the inference that mere objects of sense could never be objects of cognition. Again, we might prove that self could not be known as material, or

PROP. X.

as a presentation of sense; but unless the postulate were also true that self must be known along with all the sensible presentations, we should be equally deprived of a rational ground for our conclusion. But these two premises are now established institutional articles; and it is conceived that, taken together, they afford an impregnable demonstration of the proposition before us.

Tenth counter-proposition.

2. *Tenth Counter-proposition.*—"*Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuit in sensu*"—that is, "Nothing *but* mere objects of sense can ever be objects of cognition; in other words, whatever has a place in the intellect can contain only such elements as have had a place in the senses: or otherwise expressed—the senses, by themselves, and the senses only, are competent to place any knowable or intelligible thing before the mind." This counter-proposition is certainly, in the highest degree, consonant with our natural, or ordinary, or unphilosophical habits of thought.

The Leibnitzian restriction of counter-proposition.

3. The well-known limitation of this maxim by Leibnitz, who, to the words "nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuit in sensu," added the restriction, *nisi ipse intellectus*, may, perhaps, deserve a passing comment. Had Leibnitz said that intellect must know itself along with all that it apprehends by the aid of the senses, and had he proved that intellect

could not know itself as material, his amendment would have been all that could be required to constitute a true proposition. Perhaps this was his meaning; but if so, it finds no adequate expression in his words, for these merely declare that nothing is in the intellect (except itself) which was not taken in through the senses—a position which does not *prove* that the intellect cannot know itself to be material, and which does not even affirm that all *mere* objects of sense are incognisable by intelligence. If the intellect merely *is* in itself, without being at all times *known* to itself, mere sensible or material objects—that is, objects known without any subject being known along with them—may very well be apprehended. The Leibnitzian restriction goes for nothing. PROP. X.

4. The counter-proposition, in its original language, is not altogether unambiguous. The version of it given above is purposely extreme, in order that it may stand forth freed from all equivocation. That the words will bear this interpretation is undoubted. It will be apparent, also, before we have done, that in no other sense will they yield anything like a consistent, or even an intelligible, doctrine; and that every attempt to qualify them (short of the correction and subversion which they receive from Prop. X.) has only resulted in "confusion worse confounded." Comment on the translation here given of the counter-proposition.

PROP. X.

The counter-proposition is equally contradictory, whether accepted without, or with, a restriction.

5. This counter-proposition is erroneous and contradictory, not only because it affirms that *all* our knowledge is merely sensible, but because it affirms that *any* of it is merely sensible. It affirms that the whole of our cognitions are due to the senses solely. No doubt that position is false and contradictory; but it is equally false and contradictory, if we suppose it merely to mean that some of our cognitions are due to the senses solely. Because (by Prop. I.) it has been settled that every one of our cognitions must contain and present an element (to wit, the *me*) which (by Prop. VIII.) cannot come through the senses. So that to whatever extent the counter-proposition is adopted, it is equally contradictory: it is contradictory if taken in all its latitude; it is just as contradictory if taken in a more restricted sense.

The counter-proposition is the foundation of "sensualism"—character of sensualism.

6. The scholastic brocard, which has been adopted as the tenth counter-proposition, is the fundamental article in the creed of that school of philosophers who are called "the sensualists"—no insinuation being implied in this designation, that they are more addicted to carnal indulgences than their opponents; but the term being used simply to signify that, in their estimation, the whole mass of human knowledge is ultimately referable to, and originally derived from, the senses. They sometimes take, and get, credit for being the only philosophers who refer our knowledge wholly to experience. All philosophers,

however, whatever school they may belong to, do the same, unless Kant is to be considered as an exception. In distinguishing between our cognitions, according as they come from without, or are originated from within, this philosopher seems to refer the former class only to experience. But this is obviously a very arbitrary and unwarrantable limitation of the term. If the mind has any innate, or native, or *a priori*, cognitions, these are to be traced to experience (to an experience of their necessity), just as much as its acquired, or *a posteriori*, knowledge is to be referred to that source. Indeed, it is obvious that all knowledge is itself experience, and that the two terms are merely different names for the same thing. To say that all knowledge comes from experience, is simply to say that all knowledge is knowledge—a tautological truism which admits of no sort of discussion. But to say that all knowledge comes from sensible experience, is to affirm that all knowledge is *mere sensible* knowledge, and that is a very different position. It is one on which much controversy has been expended. It is exactly the counter-proposition which Proposition X. convicts of contradicting two necessary truths of reason, and accordingly subverts. PROP. X.

7. Psychology has frequently challenged the validity of this counter-proposition; but her efforts having been directed merely to its limitation, the con-

PROP. X.

The anti-sensual psychology merely restricts the counter-proposition—leaves the contradiction uncorrected.

tradiction which it involves has remained uncorrected; for, as has been said, the counter-proposition is equally contradictory, whether it be taken in all its latitude, or under some restriction. The psychologists have merely rejected it in its broader acceptation. They deny that the whole of our knowledge is derived from the senses, but they concede that some of it is referable to that single source. The psychological limitation is this: It is not true, says the psychologist, that all our cognitions come to us through the senses; but it is certainly true that some of them are due solely to that source—not meaning that the data furnished by the senses are mere *elements* of cognition, but that they are *actual cognitions themselves*. The anti-sensualist movement which, for a considerable time past, has shown itself in the philosophy of this country, of France, and of Germany, has certainly not got beyond this qualified repudiation of the scholastic dogma on which sensualism is founded. This qualified repudiation, which is equivalent to a modified acceptance, leaves the contradiction precisely where it was.

The root of the mischief. History of distinction between sense and intellect.

8. The root of the mischief is to be found in the obliteration, in modern times, of the cardinal distinction between Sense and Intellect which was taken at a very early period by the Greek philosophers, and which it is most essential to the progress of all definite and well-regulated speculation to restore, and to up-

hold in all its original stringency. This distinction is perhaps the most important that was ever drawn in philosophy. And, therefore, the history of the various fortunes which it has undergone, and of the controversies and perplexities which have arisen from confounding it, cannot be out of place in a work which professes to furnish the text of all metaphysical annotation. This, too, is the proposition under which the discussion referred to appropriately falls. PROP. X.

9. It has been stated elsewhere (Prop. IV., Obs. 20), that the aim of the early Greek metaphysic, in so far as it was of an epistemological character, was the explanation of the conversion of the unintelligible into the intelligible—of the process through which the unknowable passed into the knowable—of the change which the not-to-be-understood had to undergo in becoming the to-be-understood. Hence it, of course, fixes its starting-point in the absolutely unknowable and unintelligible; that is, in the contradictory, or, as we should nowadays say, in plainer language, in the utterly nonsensical. To suppose that the aim of this philosophy was to explain how that which was *already* knowable and intelligible *became* knowable and intelligible, would be to impute to it an amount of ineptitude which it was reserved for a much later generation of theorists to incur. This, then, is its problem, to explain how the contradictory becomes comprehensible; and the

Aim and procedure of Greek metaphysics.

PROP. X.

following is the way in which it goes to work. It fixes Sense as the faculty of the contradictory, the faculty of nonsense (*δύναμις τοῦ ἀλόγου*). This faculty seizes on the nonsensical, the contradictory, the unintelligible (*τὰ ἄλογα*, or *ἀνοήτα*). It lays hold of the material universe *per se*, and this, in that unsupplemented condition, is the absurd, the senseless, the insane, the incomprehensible to all intellect (*τὸ ἀλόγον*). The problem, now, is to explain how this world of nonsense, apprehended by this faculty of nonsense, becomes the world of intelligence, the knowable and known universe (*τὸ νοήτον*). And this conversion is explained by the contribution of some element which Intellect (*νοῦς*) supplies out of its own resources, and adds to the world of nonsense, which then, being supplemented by this heterogeneous element, starts out of the night of contradiction into the daylight of completed cognition. What this element is these old philosophers did not find it so easy to explain.

A rule for the historian of philosophy.

10. In dealing with the history of philosophical opinion, the only way to reach clear and satisfactory results is to begin by giving a philosopher credit, in the first instance, for such tenets as the general scope of his observations appears most to countenance, and afterwards to balance the account by debiting him with such deductions as he may be liable to on the score of ambiguity or imperfect fulfilment of his

intention; in fact, by first taking into view his aim as if he had accomplished it, and then by pointing out how far, in his own confusion, he may have missed or fallen short of it. On no other principle than this can the behests of a critical history of philosophy be fulfilled, or her books kept free from embarrassment. Because merely to exhibit the efforts of speculative thinking in the crude and inexplicit forms in which they may have been originally propounded, affords no insight into their true import and tendency. No purpose of any kind is answered when the recorder of philosophical opinions states, as he is too often in the habit of doing, a confused and ambiguous doctrine in terms equally ambiguous and confused. PROP. X.

11. This being understood, it will be proper to proceed as we have begun, and to lay out the doctrines now under consideration in a distinct and explicit shape, and as if they had been expounded in that shape by the early Greek speculators—for that these doctrines were theirs by implication, and that their aim was such as has been described, however unsteady their procedure may have been, is certain. What abatements may be required will be seen when we come to show forth their ambiguities, and the consequences of these ambiguities on the subsequent progress of speculation. To resume, then, the thread of the discussion. This rule observed in these Institutes.

PROP. X.

Return to history of distinction between sense and intellect.

12. From what has been already said, it is obvious that the distinction drawn by the old philosophers between sense and intellect was as extreme as it is possible to conceive. Not that they regarded sense and intellect as two distinct and separate faculties; their distinction was more complete and thorough-going than that. They rather regarded them as two distinct and opposite poles or factors of one and the same faculty, or rather of one and the same mind. Sense was the factor which seized and brought before the mind the unintelligible and nonsensical data which intellect had to transmute into the knowable and known. In that state these data were absolutely incomprehensible by the mind. They were as yet no objects of cognition. They became objects of cognition only after the intellect, wakening into action, transferred over upon them some element of its own, which gave completion to their inchoation. By means of this additional element an object of cognition was formed; and the mind was able to apprehend it by apprehending the two elements together—the elements, namely, which had been supplied by the senses, and that additional contribution, whatever it was, which intellect had furnished. By this process, which cannot be directly observed while in operation, but only recovered by means of philosophical reflection, the nonsensical things of sense become the intelligible things of intellect. The material universe assumes the finished character which it

presents to the intelligence of all mankind; it ceases to be incompleted, incomprehensible, and absurd. The senses, however, have still no dealings with this universe, in so far as it is known or cogitable, but only in so far as it is unintelligible and contradictory. That is particularly to be borne in mind as the very soul of these old philosophies. The senses cannot, even in the smallest degree, execute the office of intellect; they are occupied only with unmitigated nonsense. Consequently, they can have no share either in redeeming this contradictory—that is, in rendering it intelligible—or in intelligently cognising it when redeemed. Their sole function is to bring it before the intellect, which, however, cannot apprehend it unless it apprehend something else (τὸ ἕτερον, according to the old systems; or *itself*, according to these Institutes) as well. PROP. XX.

13. The following illustration will explain this position exactly: Let us suppose that the contradictory, the anoetic, is more than nothing (0), but less than anything (1). But this (the more than 0, but less than 1) is what no intellect can apprehend. That is precisely what the Greek philosophers affirm; and they affirm it of the whole sensible world, considered *per se*. Matter, by and in itself, is more than nothing, yet less than one. This is by far the best symbol or figure by which it can be expressed. But that is nonsense and a contradiction. Precisely Illustration of early Greek doctrine.

PROP. X. so. Unless it were nonsense, these old philosophers could not have commenced their operations. They had to explain how nonsense becomes sense. They must accordingly be allowed their nonsense, their contradictory. If a man has to make clay into bricks, he must at any rate be furnished with clay. Accordingly, they hold that the whole sensible or material world is nonsense and a contradiction. But nonsense cannot be apprehended. True, say they, it cannot be apprehended by the factor or faculty of intellect; but it can be taken up by that factor of the mind whose special function it is to lay hold of nonsense; and this factor is the complement of the senses. These are specially fitted and commissioned to lay hold of the nonsensical; they seize upon that which is more than nothing but less than anything; they bring before intellect the incomprehensible world of matter *per se*, and having done so, intellect then contributes the element which is required to change nonsense into sense; it adds to that which is more than 0 but less than 1, the additament which is required to make it 1: it confers on the mere sensible world the element necessary to its apprehension; it thus converts the contradictory into the comprehensible, and constitutes and compasses the intelligible.

14. There can be no question that the old philosophers were right both in their conception of the

PROP. C

true problem of philosophy, and in their manner of working it. The conversion of the unintelligible into the intelligible—to exhibit how that conversion is effected was the problem they took in hand; and this is one of the forms, and one of the very best, in which the highest problem of speculation can be presented. Their next step was to find and fix their unintelligible, their contradictory; because if there was no unintelligible, or if it could not be found, of course there was an end both to the problem and to its solution. Accordingly they fixed matter *per se* as the contradictory. But if this contradictory is to be converted into the non-contradictory, it must be brought, in some way or other, before the mind. Their next step, therefore, was to find the means by which this was effected. The senses were held to be these means. The function assigned to the senses was that of bringing before the mind that which was absolutely unintelligible. And thus in tracing back into its history the distinction between sense and intellect, we perceive that, consistently with the character of the problem of the earlier philosophy, and with the method of working it, the senses, although they had to execute a most important function, were fixed, of necessity, as faculties of absolute nonsense—an opinion with which the doctrine advanced in this tenth proposition entirely coincides. Sense was thus fixed as essentially distinct from intellect.

The old philosophers were right in their problem—in their way of working it, and in fixing sense as the faculty of nonsense.

PROP. X.

A reason why the truth of this doctrine is not obvious.

15. The reason why the truth of this doctrine is not at once obvious is, because, although the mind always *really* apprehends *more* than what the senses place before it, still it apparently apprehends *only* what the senses place before it. This, at least, is its predicament in its ordinary moods. Hence, it supposes that the senses place before it, not what is nonsensical, but what is intelligible. Its own contribution, however, makes all the difference. If this were abstracted, the residue must be absolutely incomprehensible, because the additament in question (the known self) is necessary, not only to the constitution of the knowledge of this or of that order of intelligence, but to the constitution of the knowledge of intelligence universally. If the inferior animals have no cognisance of themselves (and there is good reason to believe that they have none, although no opinion is here offered on this point), in that case, with all their senses, they are mere incarnate absurdities, gazing upon unredeemed contradiction.

Βλέποντες ἔβλεπον μάτην,
κλύοντες οὐκ ἤκουον·

ÆSCH., *Prom.*, 447.

Difficulty and difference of opinion as to intellectual element.

16. The old philosophers experienced more difficulty in determining the character of the other mental factor—the office, namely, of intellect as contrasted with sense—and in explaining the nature of the intellectual element which changes chaos into

cosmos, the supplement which converts a world rolling in contradictory nonsense (the whole material universe *per se*) into a world radiant with beauty, order, and intelligence. According to Pythagoras, this conversion was effected by means of "numbers," a pure contribution of intellect. According to Plato, it was effected by means of "ideas." According to these Institutes, it is accomplished by the *me* being always of necessity apprehended along with whatever is apprehended. This is the light of chaos, the harmoniser of contradictory discord—the orderer of unutterable disorder—the source both of unity and plurality—the only transmuter of senselessness into sense. The three systems agree in this respect, that the intellectual element is a "universal;" and that the sensible element is a "singular" or particular"—only there is this difference as to *what* the universal is: with Pythagoras it was "number;" with Plato it was "idea;" with this system it is the "ego." PROP. X.

17. Having thus stated the doctrine of the early speculators in distinct and explicit terms, we have now to balance the account. Considerable deductions must be made on the score of ambiguity and confusion, although not to such an extent as to throw the smallest suspicion on the accuracy of the exposition just given of their views, in so far as intention and aim are concerned. The old philosophers did not explain themselves at all clearly. Their problem Ambiguities of the old philosophers.

PROP. X.

was not distinctly enunciated; and what was still more misleading, instead of calling sense the faculty of nonsense, which was unquestionably their meaning, they laid it down simply as the faculty of sense; and instead of calling sensible things nonsensical things, they were usually satisfied with calling them sensible things, or at least they were not at pains to announce with unmistakable precision that sensible things (τὰ αἰσθητὰ) were strictly identical with senseless or contradictory things (τὰ ἀνόητα).

Three misconceptions arising out of these ambiguities.

18. Out of these ambiguities the three following leading misconceptions have arisen—mistakes which, now pervading the whole body of speculative science, have rendered the study of metaphysic a discipline of distraction, instead of what it ought be, an exercise of clear and systematic thinking. *First*, The problem having been obscurely expressed, succeeding philosophers have taken it up, as if the question for consideration was, How does the intelligible become intelligible? not, How does the unintelligible become intelligible? Intimately connected with this misconception are the other two. *Secondly*, Sense, not having been fixed with sufficient precision as the faculty of nonsense, came to be regarded as a kind of intellect. Of course, if it is not altogether a senseless or nonsensical capacity, it must be to some extent an intellectual power. The ambiguity in the old speculations allowed sense to be regarded as a sort of cog-

nitive endowment, or, at any rate, as possessing, to some extent, a capacity of cognition. And, accordingly, as such it is now actually fixed by the whole psychology at present in vogue. No pains, at least, are taken by any existing system to guard against this misconception. *Thirdly*, Sensible things not having been laid down by the old philosophers with sufficient distinctness as absolutely nonsensical and contradictory things, came, in the course of time, to be looked upon as a kind of intelligible things; for, of course, whatever is not thoroughly nonsensical must be, in some way, and to some extent, comprehensible. PROP. X.

19. These three misconceptions, and their baneful effects on the growth of philosophy, must be noticed somewhat more particularly. *First*, The true and original problem was, How does the unintelligible, the nonsensical, or, in the language of the old schools, "the sensible," become the intelligible? In other words, how is knowing effected?—what is knowable and known? That, more than two thousand years ago, was the leading question of philosophy (in so far as philosophy was epistemological, and not ontological), as it still is of these Institutes. But owing to some indistinctness in the original enunciation, this problem has been converted into the very futile inquiry, How does the intelligible become the intelligible? how does that which is knowable and known, be- Comment on first misconception.

PROP. X.

come that which is knowable and known? how does something *become* what it already *is?* This is the problem of philosophy as now entertained by the cultivators of psychology, in so far as psychology ventures into the region of the higher metaphysics. The material universe is assumed to be that which is already intelligible, and non-contradictory in itself; and no sooner is it confronted with a percipient mind than a cognisance of it takes place. That statement is held nowadays to be sound philosophy—to be information which a man is not only entitled to communicate, but *to be paid* for communicating!

Comment on second misconception.

20. The *second* misconception is of a piece with the first. The two hang inseparably together. The psychologists, those arch-corrupters of philosophy, have confounded the old distinction between sense and intellect, by supposing that sense was to some extent invested with the functions of intellect. Whether they conceived that the material universe *per se* was to some extent intelligible, because the senses were a sort of intellect capable of cognising it, or, conversely, that the senses were a sort of intellect capable of this cognisance, because the material universe *per se* was to some extent intelligible, is a point not worth inquiring into. Certain it is that these two positions go together in the ordinary books upon psychology. Matter, or its qualities at least, are held to be cognisable *per se*, and the senses

are held to be, in their own way, a sort of cognitive power—a kind of intellect. But if the senses are a sort of intellect, what sort of *intellect* is intellect? If the senses execute the office of the intellect, what function has the intellect to perform? If the senses are promoted into the place of the intellect, the intellect must go elsewhere—it must "move on." If the senses are *it*, and execute its work, *it* must be something else, and must execute some other work. What that something else is, and what that other work is, no mortal psychologist has ever told, or ever can tell. The curse of an everlasting darkness rests upon all his labours. The attempt, indeed, to face systems which, while they profess to distinguish the mental functions and faculties, thus hopelessly confuse them, is to encounter a prospect too alarming for the eye of reason to contemplate.

21. Worse remains to be told. *Thirdly*, if the data of sense, the sensibles of the older schools (*αἰσθητὰ*, sensibilia) are construed by psychology as a sort of intelligibles, pray what are the intelligibles of these older systems? (*νοήτα*, intelligibilia). If the sensibles are advanced into the place of the intelligibles, the intelligibles must be translated into something else. What is that something else? Nobody knows, and nobody *can* know; for there is nothing else for them to be. Yet the whole philosophical world has been hunting, day and night, after these

Comment on third misconception.

PROP. X. elusory phantoms through eighty generations of men. We have had expositors of Plato, commentator after commentator, talking of their great master's super-sensible world as something very sublime —something very different from the sensible world in which the lot of us poor ordinary mortals is cast —insinuating, moreover, that *they* had got a glimpse of this grand supra-mundane territory. Rank impostors. Not one of them ever saw so much as the fringes of its borders; for there is no such world for them to see; and Plato never referred them to any such incomprehensible sphere. This *terra incognita* is a mere dream—a fable, a blunder of their own invention. *Plato's intelligible world is our sensible world.* We shall see by-and-by in the ontology that this announcement may require a very slight modification, but one so slight that meanwhile it may be proclaimed, in the broadest terms, that Plato's intelligible or super-sensible is our sensible world—just the material universe which we see and hear and handle: this, and nothing but this, is Plato's ideal and intelligible home. But then,—his sensible world must be moved a peg downwards. It must be thrust down into the regions of nonsense. It must be called, as we have properly called it, and as he certainly meant to call, and sometimes did call it, the nonsensical world, the world of pure infatuation, of downright contradiction, of unalloyed absurdity; and this the whole material universe is,

PROP. X.

when divorced from the element which makes it a knowable and cogitable thing. Take away from the understood the element which renders it understandible, and nonsense must remain behind. Take away from the intelligible world—that is, from the system of things by which we are surrounded—the essential element which enables us, and all intelligence, to know and apprehend it, and it must lapse into utter and unutterable absurdity. It becomes—not nothing—remember that—not nothing, for *nothing*, just as much as *thing*, requires the presence of the element which we have supposed to be withdrawn; but it becomes more than nothing, yet less than anything; * what the logicians term "an excluded middle." The material world is not annihilated when the intelligible element is withdrawn—as some rash and short-sighted idealists seem inclined to suppose. Very far from that: but it is worse, or rather better, than annihilated: it is reduced to the predicament of a contradiction, and banished to the purgatory of nonsense.

Key to the Greek philosophy.

22. Understand by Plato's sensible world (τὸ *αισθητόν*, τὸ *ἄλογον*, τὸ *ἀνοήτον*, τὸ *γιγνόμενον*) the absolutely incomprehensible and contradictory, and understand

* This is precisely what is meant by the term *γιγνόμενον*. *Γιγνεσθαι* means to become—that is, to be becoming something—that is, to be in the transition between nothing and something—that is, to be *more* than nothing, but *less* than anything. (Compare what is said about the fluxional character of material things. Prop. VII., Obss. 14, *et seq.*)

PROP. X.

by his intelligible or real world (τὸ ὄντως ὄν) the sensible world as we now actually behold it, and his whole philosophy becomes luminous and plain. (This statement may require, as has been said, a slight qualification hereafter). But understand by his sensible world what *we* mean by the sensible world, and the case becomes altogether hopeless, confused beyond all extrication. Because, what then is his intelligible world? A thing not to be explained, either by himself, or by any man of woman born. There cannot be a doubt that his sensible world is the world with the element of all intelligibility taken out; but that must be appropriately termed the nonsensical or unintelligible world: and just as little can there be any doubt that his intelligible world is the world with the element of all intelligibility put in; but this is what *we*, nowadays, usually call the sensible world. So that, to preserve the relation between the two terms, in the sense in which Plato understood them—indeed, to understand the relation in the only acceptation in which it can be understood—we must bear in mind that the contrast which, in his phraseology, was indicated by the words *sensible* and *intelligible*, must be signalised, in modern speech, by the terms *nonsensical* and *sensible*, for the latter word is used nowadays very generally, instead of the word "intelligible." These remarks supply a key, and the only key, to the entire philosophy of ancient Greece. This key, however, seems to have been mislaid until

now. If this is denied, the denier must be prepared to point out some place in any book, ancient or modern, in which one intelligible word is uttered about Plato's intelligible world. When that is done, this presumptive claim shall be relinquished, and the key given up to its proper owner. PROP. X.

23. We have now got to the root of the sensualist maxim which constitutes counter-proposition X. It is founded on the obliteration of the distinction which, at an early period, was drawn, although not very clearly, between sense and intellect. If this distinction be not kept up in all its stringency—that is to say, unless it be held that the functions of the two are altogether disparate, and that the senses are totally incompetent to execute the office of intelligence—the distinction had much better be abandoned. This is what the extreme sensualists maintain. The doctrine had been continually gaining ground, either *per incuriam*, or by design, that the senses were to some extent intellectual, were capable of cognition, or were competent to place intelligible data before the mind. But if sense can act as intellect, what is the use of intellect—why any intellect at all? If sense can intelligently apprehend anything, why can it not intelligently apprehend everything? Let man diligently cultivate his senses, and his advances in knowledge shall be immense. And why not? All that is wanted is a commencement. This is found

Return to counter-proposition. It is founded on a confusion of the distinction between sense and intellect.

PROP. X.

in the admission that the senses possess an inherent tincture, a nascent capacity, of intelligence. Their data are not in themselves nonsensical. Once admit this, and the plea of intellect is at an end. Why multiply faculties without necessity? These considerations led by degrees to the adoption of the counter-proposition in all its latitude. All cognition was held to be mere sensation, and all intellect was sense. The logic of the extreme sensualists is impregnable on the ground which they assume, to wit, the concession, that the senses are not altogether faculties of nonsense. How is their argument to be met?

The Lockian and the Kantian psychology in limiting the counter-proposition effect no subversion of sensualism.

24. Not, certainly, by the psychological assertion, that the senses are not *so* intelligent as the intellect, that the intellect is *more* intelligent than the senses. This sorry plea, which reduces the distinction between sense and intellect to a mere difference of degree, and relinquishes it as an absolute difference of nature, has done no good, but much harm, by adding confusion to what before was only error. It is indeed the very plea on which the whole strength of sensualism is founded—only sensualism has the advantage in this respect, that by carrying the doctrine forth to its legitimate issue—in other words, by obliterating the distinction completely—it eliminates the confusion, retaining only the error. It is unnecessary to argue against so futile a doctrine,

although the whole psychological fraternity have embraced it. Considered as a bulwark against even the most extreme sensualism, its impotence is too obvious to require to be pointed out. A lower order of intellect, which is sense, and a higher order of sense, which is intellect,—not assuredly in that perplexed way is our mental economy administered. Nature, under Providence, works by finer means than the clumsy expedients which psychology gives her credit for. If we must have error, let us have it uncomplicated with confusion. If we must have sensualism, let us have it clear and undiluted. Vain are all the compromises of psychology—worse than vain, for they make error doubly obnoxious by rendering it plausible. In vain did Locke, whose hand it chiefly was, in modern times, that let loose the flood of sensualism—in vain did he make a stand in defence of the degraded intellect. A protest is impotent against a principle, and his own principle condemned him. He had acknowledged sense as an intellectual power; and hence, with all his saving clauses, he was swept away before the roaring torrent. In vain did Kant endeavour to stem the flood. He, too, had admitted that the senses, if they did not supply perfect cognitions, furnished, at any rate, some sort of intelligible data to the mind: so down he went, with all his categories, into the vortices of sensualism.

25. It may seem unfair to class Kant among the

PROP. X.

Kant's doctrine impotent against sensualism.

sensualists, of whom he was so unflinching an opponent. Nevertheless, the classification is correct. Many a philosopher lends unintentional support to the very doctrine he strenuously denounces, and unintentional opposition to the very doctrine he strenuously recommends. Thus has it been with Kant. The inconsistency would not signify were it not vital. But in Kant's case the inconsistency is vital; it touches an essential part; it saps the foundation of his system. Kant's error, when traced to its source, is to be found in his refusal to assume, as his foundation, some necessary truth of reason — some law binding on intelligence, simply considered as such. In consequence of this deliberate neglect, he was unable to fix "things in themselves" (*dinge an sich*) as contradictory. Hence, if things in themselves (matter *per se*) are not contradictory, the sensible impressions—the intuitions, as he calls them—to which these things give rise, need not be contradictory either. But if they are not contradictory, they must, when presented to the mind, be, to some extent at least, intelligible. At any rate, when supplemented by the intuition of space, which Kant calls the form of the sensory, and which he regards as a pure mental contribution, they must present some apprehensible appearance. This, accordingly, is Kant's doctrine. The sensible intuitions, though at first scattered, disjointed, and undigested, are not altogether nonsensical. They are in some degree intelligible. They

are merely reduced to a higher degree of order and luminosity when united to the form of the sensory (space), and subjugated to the categories of the understanding. If this be a misconception of Kant's doctrine, it is one which he has been at no pains to guard against. At all events, whatever Kant may have *intended* to say (and the evidence that he did intend to say it is very insufficient), he has certainly not *said* that the sensible intuitions, the space in which they are contained, together with all the mental categories that may be applied to them, are, one and all of them, absolutely contradictory and absurd, unless the *me* is known along with them. But unless Kant maintained that position, he effected no subversion of sensualism. Unless he held that sense, considered simply as such, is a faculty of nonsense, and that the sensible data, considered simply as such, are contradictory, he did nothing to uphold the essential distinction between sense and intellect. This, however, he does not appear to have held. He regarded the distinction, not as a difference of nature, but as a mere difference of degree. But this is to obliterate the distinction. A small man is as much a man as a big man; and a small or inferior cognitive power (sense, according to Kant) is as much a cognitive power as a great or superior cognitive power (intellect, according to Kant). The only true opposition is between intellect and non-intellect. Intellect is intelligent, and its objects are

PROP. X.

intelligible. Sense is non-intelligent, and its objects are nonsensical. All knowledge is intellectual knowledge—mere sensible knowledge is a contradiction. This is the only distinction between sense and intellect which *is* a distinction, or which can be understood. It is the only ground on which sensualism can be effectually overthrown. The other distinction is a distinction without a difference—one which cannot be understood, and which leaves sensualism standing as before.

The statement in par. 4, and the charge in par. 7, are borne out by the foregoing remarks.

26. These remarks may be sufficient to establish the correctness of the statement made in Observation 4, that every attempt to qualify or restrict the counter-proposition short of its subversion by Proposition X., has only had the effect of adding confusion to error, (for what has been proved in regard to Kant, may very well be assumed in regard to other psychologists), and that the scholastic maxim, if accepted at all, ought to be accepted in all its latitude. They also bear out the charge advanced in Observation 7, that the anti-sensual psychology of Kant and others has left the contradiction involved in sensualism uncorrected. This contradiction consists not merely in the assertion that the data of sense are *alone* intelligible to the mind, but in the opinion that any of these data are *at all* intelligible to the mind *before* the mind has supplemented them with itself, and apprehended, not them, but the

synthesis of them and itself. This opinion is nowhere distinctly overthrown by the philosophy of Kant; and therefore our conclusion is, that instead of his system having destroyed sensualism, the sensualism latent in his system has rather destroyed it. PROP. X.

27. It must be confessed, however, that Kant is sometimes very nearly right. All that he wanted was a firm grasp of the principle, which he seems at times to have got hold of, namely, that the senses supplied no cognitions, but mere elements of cognition. This principle necessarily fixes the sensible elements of cognition as contradictory—as data not to be known on any terms by any intelligence when placed out of relation to the *me*, the other complemental element of all cognition. Here, however, Kant would have been hampered by the fetters of his own system; for, indulging in an unwarrantable hypothesis, he denies the strict universality and necessity of any intellectual law, (that is, its necessity and universality in relation to intelligence, considered simply as intelligence). So that he could scarcely have profited by the principle referred to, even if he had adhered to it with unflinching consistency, which he certainly does not. He falls just as often, perhaps oftener, over into the counter-statement, that the sensible intuitions are not mere elements, but are a kind of cognition. In fact, it is evident that the misinterpretation of the Platonic

Kant sometimes nearly right. He errs through a neglect of necessary truth.

PROP. X.

analysis, in which elements were mistaken for kinds, and which, as we have seen, (see Prop. VI.), has played such havoc in philosophy generally, has carried its direful influence even into the psychological museum of Kant, and exhibits its fatal presence in all his elaborate preparations.

The true compromise between Sense and Intellect.

28. It may appear to some that psychology, in adopting the counter-proposition with the qualification that sense is, to some extent, or with incertain limits, a cognitive faculty, has wisely steered a middle course between two extremes, by which the Scylla of an excessive sensualism is avoided on the one hand, and the Charybdis of an extravagant intellectualism on the other. The truth, however, is, that the compromise here attempted is one which leads inevitably to an extreme, and runs psychology, as might be shown from the history of this pretended science, into one or other of the very excesses which she is anxious to avoid. Moderation—compromise is the essence of all that is good; it is merely another name for order; it is the means by which Providence itself works. But the compromise, if it is to be true and effectual, and a preservative against extremes, must be one of nature's forming, and not of man's manufacturing. It must be brought about by natural laws, and not by artificial conjectures. All our knowledge is itself the result of a compromise between sense and intellect—two endowments, each of which

is impotent without the other. And, therefore, to affirm that sense alone, or that intellect alone, is capable of affording cognition, or that either by itself can place anything but contradiction before the mind, is to supersede the natural compromise, and to set up a new one, which is a mere figment of the fancy. This is not moderation; this is not steering a safe *via media*. This kind of compromise is not the compromise which nature has set on foot. This tampering with the truth is the initiatory step which, if once taken, is sure to land us in the perdition of an extreme. Because, if sense, uncompanioned by intellect, can furnish any knowledge, why can it not furnish all knowledge, to the mind? That smashing question supersedes intellect, and an extravagant sensualism is enthroned. Again, if intellect, unaided by the senses (that is, by certain modes of apprehension, either the same as, or different from, ours), can supply any knowledge to the mind, why need it look to the senses for any of the materials of cognition? An excessive intellectualism—a wild idealism—is the result; and a subjective phantasmagoria of shadows usurps the place of a real and richly-diversified creation. In point of fact, philosophy has, ere now, been hurried into these two extremes—a consequence entirely attributable to the circumstance that, losing sight of the natural compromise *between* sense and intellect, she has supposed that this compromise was effected *within* each of them; that is to say, that

PROP. X. each of them was capable, in its own way, of cognition. The only safe opinion to hold is, that the *two* constitute *one* capacity of cognition, and can bring knowledge to the mind only when in joint operation. —(For further information, see Prop. XVII., and, in particular, Obs. 21 *et seq.*)

PROPOSITION XI.

PRESENTATION AND REPRESENTATION.

That alone can be represented in thought which can be presented in knowledge: in other words, it is impossible to think what it is impossible to know; or, more explicitly, it is impossible to think that of which knowledge has supplied, and can supply, no sort of type.

DEMONSTRATION.

REPRESENTATION is the iteration in thought of what was formerly presented in knowledge. It is therefore a contradiction to suppose that what never was, and never can be, known, can be iterated or represented in thought. Repetition necessarily implies a foregone lesson. Therefore that alone can be represented in thought which can be presented in knowledge; in other words, it is impossible to think what it is impossible to know;—it is impossible to think that of which knowledge has supplied, and can supply, no sort of type.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

PROP. XI.

Why this proposition is introduced.

1. In this proposition a distinction is laid down between knowing and thinking—between cognition and conception. This distinction is necessary in order to unearth the verdicts of common opinion and of psychological science from the burrows into which they may run, when dislodged from their usual positions by the cannonade of the preceding propositions. When the articles specified in these propositions, and particularly in IV., V., and IX., are proved to be altogether *unknowable*, common opinion and psychological science may perhaps concede this, and yet may entertain the supposition that they are not absolutely *unthinkable*. Hence, lest it should be supposed that thought is competent to represent what cognition is incompetent to present, and that the absolute unknowables have thus another chance of being, in some way or other, the objects of the mind, it has been deemed necessary to introduce this and the following proposition for the purpose of destroying that opinion, and of pursuing the unknowables, not into their ultimate place of refuge, (for, as we shall find in the agnoiology, they have still another hiding-quarter into which they must be followed and slaughtered by the sword of necessary truth), but into their penultimate citadel of shelter. This dialectical operation will unfold itself in the next proposition. Meanwhile all that is necessary

to bear in mind is the distinction between knowing and thinking, cognition and conception, presentation and representation, which is laid down in the following paragraph. PROP. XI.

2. The term knowledge might be used, and sometimes is used, in this work, in a general way, to signify both any given presentation or cognition at the time when it is actually experienced, and the subsequent thought or representation or remembrance of such experienced presentation. But at present the distinction to be signalised is this: The word knowledge or knowing is employed to express our original experiences—the perceptions, for example, which we have of things when they are actually before us; and the word thought, or thinking, is employed to express our subsequent experience—that is, our representation or cogitation of that previous knowledge. To know, then, is to experience a perception or presentation of any kind in the first instance, or at first hand; to think is to revive such perception at a subsequent period, or to have it at second hand. Distinction between knowing and thinking.

3. This proposition, and not the scholastic brocard which forms the tenth counter-proposition, is the foundation of a *true* philosophy of experience. The scholastic dogma is false and contradictory. It affirms that the mind can think of nothing but mere This proposition the foundation of a true philosophy of experience.

PROP. XI.

objects of sense; but the truth is, that the mind cannot think at all of mere objects of sense. It is, however, an undoubted truth that the mind can think only of what it can know or experience. For suppose it could think of something, at first hand, which it had never known; in that case the thing would be merely a known, instead of being a thought, thing; and the truth of the proposition would be in no degree compromised. It is impossible for any intelligence to take at second hand what it never had at first hand, because, whenever this happened, the thing so taken would be no longer taken at second, but at first, hand; instead of being thought, it would be known, and the law expressed in this proposition would be vindicated all the same. This is the whole truth of the philosophy which makes experience the source and mother of all that the mind of man can conceive.

Representation—its two insuperable restrictions.

4. The law which declares that representation must copy the data of presentation—that thought can walk only in the footsteps of an antecedent knowledge—is, in certain respects, not to be interpreted too strictly. Thought can alter the arrangement of the data of experience. It can mould the materials of knowledge into new combinations. This is called the play of the imagination, which at pleasure can fabricate representations of which experience has furnished no exact type or pattern. Moreover,

when knowledge has supplied thought with a single type or model of any kind, it can conceive other cases of that type or model, though these should never fall under its direct knowledge or observation. It can conceive the type of which one example has been submitted to it, repeated *ad infinitum*, and with certain variations. And, further, supposing intelligences different from ours to exist, we can conceive them both to know and to think much which is inconceivable to us. But still in all its dealings with knowledge—in all its cuttings and carvings upon the data of experience—*our* thought, and *all* thought, is subject to the two following restrictions, which cannot be, in the slightest degree, transgressed.

5. The *first* restriction to which all thought or representation is subject is this: Thought cannot transcend knowledge so as to invent any entire and absolute novelty. It cannot add to the data of experience anything of which knowledge or experience cannot possibly furnish any sort of type, either direct or remote. Thought cannot create any element beyond what might possibly be given in knowledge or experience. The *second* restriction is this: Thought cannot so transgress knowledge as entirely to leave out, or abolish, any element which is essential to the constitution of original cognition, of antecedent experience. The two restrictions may be stated thus: Thought cannot transcend know-

First restriction by way of addition. *Second* by way of subtraction.

PROP. XI.

ledge—representation cannot go beyond presentation, in the way of adding to the materials of knowledge any element absolutely new; nor can thought transgress experience in the way of subtracting from the materials of knowledge any element essential to the very formation of cognition. The one restriction may be termed, shortly, restriction by the way of *addition*; and the other, restriction by the way of *subtraction*. By these two restrictions all thinking is incapacitated from carrying beyond certain limits its operations on the data of experience.

The latter restriction unrecognised by philosophers. Eleventh counter-proposition.

6. All philosophers have seen that thought could not transcend experience by the way of addition: no philosopher (except Berkeley, who had a glimpse of the truth) has seen, or at least has stated, that thought is equally incompetent to transgress experience by the way of subtraction. And the consequence of their oversight shows itself in the following counter-proposition, which, although never literally propounded, may be accepted as a faithful expression of the common and psychological opinion on the subject of presentation and representation. *Eleventh Counter-proposition:* "*Less* can be represented in thought than can be presented in knowledge: it is possible to think of less than it is possible to know; in other words, in conception some element essential to cognition may be *left out*."

7. But what would happen, if we could think or represent *less* than we could know, or have presented to us? This would happen, that we should be able to represent what could *not* be known or presented to us, because less than what can be known cannot possibly be known; and, therefore, if less than what can be known could be thought of or represented, something could be thought of or represented which could not be known. But it has been proved by this proposition, and it is a necessary truth of reason, that neither we nor any intelligence can think or represent what we cannot know or have experience of; and, consequently, we cannot think of less than we can know: in other words, this counter-proposition, the progeny of psychology and inadvertent thinking, is false and contradictory. We are indebted for it to the psychological doctrine of "abstraction" which has been already animadverted on (Prop. VI., Obs. 32.)

Prop. XI. Its invalidity shown.

8. This proposition fixes the unit or *minimum* of thought as commensurate, in its essential constituents, with the unit or *minimum* of cognition. It fixes object (some thing or thought) *plus* subject as the unit of subsequent cogitation, just as Propositions II. and III. fixed this as the unit of antecedent or original cognition. It was necessary to remove all dubiety upon this point, in order to obviate any misunderstanding as to what this system really accom-

The minimum cogitabile commensurate with the minimum scibile.

PROP. XI.

plishes, as well as to correct one of the vagutst inadvertencies of ordinary opinion, and to strip away from psychology one of the last coverings with which she endeavours to conceal her weakness and deformity. The *minimum cogitabile per se* is neither more nor less essentially than the *minimum scibile per se;* but the two are of the same dimensions and composition.

Dr Reid's mistake in his assault on representationism.

9. These remarks might be followed up by some notices of the history of representationism, or, as Dr Reid terms it, the ideal theory of perception, and by some account of the controversy in regard to it in which our countryman is supposed to have particularly distinguished himself. It is, however, unnecessary to say more than this, that the whole polemic had its origin in a blunder on the part of Dr Reid, who supposed that his adversaries understood by the term "representative knowledge," something different from what he understood by the term "intuitive knowledge." Both parties meant exactly the same thing, only they called it by a different name. The representationists held that real objects stand face to face with the mind quite as decidedly as Dr Reid did, or as any sane man could do—that is to say, they held that it was our *perceptions* of these things which were immediately present to our minds. To these perceptions they gave the name indifferently of ideas, images, phantasms, or representations; whereupon Dr Reid, getting embarrassed by the ambiguity

caused by a diversified nomenclature, taxed them roundly with maintaining an hypothesis which was unsupported by facts, and had for its consequence the denial of all intuitive cognition—of all knowledge at first hand. There never was a more mistaken or unfounded charge, made though it was in perfect good faith by Dr Reid. By ideal or representative knowledge they meant, as has been said, exactly what he and his school mean by intuitive or presentative knowledge: by ideas, or images, they meant what philosophers now usually term intuitions, and what the world at large calls perceptions. And further, what Dr Reid and his school mean by ideal or representative knowledge, his opponents would have called re-representative knowledge, had they used such a term; but, instead of employing it, they expressed their meaning quite as well by the common words memory or imagination. The history of philosophical controversy has no more memorable mistake to record than this of Dr Reid, in which he supposed that his adversaries understood by representation what *he* meant by that term: he meant imagination, and supposed that they did the same; they, however, meant intuition, which was precisely the point in defence of which Dr Reid was contending; so that in reality there was no controversy at all between them, or at most a purely verbal one. Intuition may be a better word for its purpose than idea or image: presentation may be more suitable

PROP. XI.

PROP. XI.

than representation to indicate what is meant. But that is all; and this, therefore, ought now to be distinctly understood, that Dr Reid and his followers, instead of scalping a doctrine, have merely tomahawked a word.

The truth and the error of representationism.

10. The truth contained in the doctrine of representative perception is this, that it is an approximate, though imperfect, enunciation of the necessary law of all reason, which declares that nothing objective can be apprehended unless something subjective be apprehended as well. The errors of this system are traceable to its neglect or inability to eliminate from the subjective contribution in the total perceptive operation, all that is contingent, retaining only so much as is proved to be necessary, and unsusceptible of abstraction, by a reference to the law of contradiction. But the explication of this subject must be reserved for the last proposition of the epistemology, in which the contingent are disengaged from the necessary laws of cognition.

PROPOSITION XII.

MATTER PER SE AGAIN.

The material universe *per se*, and all its qualities *per se*, are not only absolutely unknowable, they are also of necessity absolutely unthinkable.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE material universe and its qualities *per se* cannot be known or presented to the mind — (Props. IV. and V.) But what cannot be known or presented to the mind, cannot be thought of, or represented, by the mind — (Prop. XI.) Therefore the material universe, and all its qualities *per se*, are absolutely unthinkable as well as absolutely unknowable.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. The introduction of this proposition, and the preceding one on which it rests, will not appear

PROP. XII.

Why this proposition is introduced.

superfluous to those who are at all acquainted with the evasive procedure of psychology. This science frequently admits that matter *per se* is not to be known, but still holds in reserve the opinion that it may, in some way or other, be thought or conceived. Thus Kant, who surrenders all knowledge of *things in themselves*, makes a reservation in favour of some kind of conception of them. Matter *per se* is called by him a *noumenon* (τὸ νοούμενον); that is to say, it is an object of thought—of pure intellectual contemplation; a position which, besides being erroneous and contradictory, is remarkable for the direct reversal of the Platonic doctrine which it involves. Matter *per se* (Kant's "ding an sich") is with Plato the absolutely unintelligible, the most alien from all conceivability: with Kant it is the object of an intellectual conception, and the approved nutriment of thought—so strange are the metamorphoses which philosophical opinions undergo in their transmission from ancient to modern thinkers. In Kant's hands Plato's transitory and phenomenal has been translated into veritable substance—the γιγνόμενον transmuted into the ὄντως ὄν. The present and preceding propositions have been introduced for the purpose of correcting this abuse, by showing that matter *per se* can be just as little the object of thought as it can be the object of knowledge. Should the reader, however, be inclined to adopt the contrary opinion, he will find satisfaction in the eleventh and twelfth

counter-propositions, which reduce to logical precision the vague and uncertain utterances of psychology on this subject, and which, *if true*, will be sufficient to uphold matter *per se* as thinkable, notwithstanding the demonstration of Proposition IV., by which it was proved to be absolutely unknowable. PROP. XII.

2. In considering this Proposition and its demonstration, the first circumstance to be attended to is this—that matter and its qualities *per se* may very well be thought of, if some additional element be not essential to their original cognition. Thought can subtract whatever is not absolutely necessary to constitute knowledge in the first instance; but thought cannot do more than this. No power of abstraction can withdraw from representation any element indispensable to the composition of presentation. Every other element may be withdrawn, but an indispensable element may not be withdrawn. This point was sufficiently explained in the preceding proposition (Obs. 5), where the limitation of thought now referred to was called restriction by the way of subtraction. On what condition matter *per se* might be thought of.

3. The question therefore is, In attempting to cogitate matter and its qualities *per se*, is thought leaving out, or endeavouring to leave out, any element essential to the original cognition of matter and its qualities? And the answer is, that thought

PROP. XII.

In attempting to think it, we must leave out an element essential to its cognition, and therefore it cannot be thought of.

is unquestionably attempting to do this. It is attempting to leave out all conception of the ego, which was antecedently apprehended along with matter and its qualities,—and this it cannot do; for the ego required to be apprehended as the very ground (Proposition I.) and essential element (Proposition II.) of the original cognition. And therefore the thought of the antecedent ego must form part of the secondary representation, just as much as the knowledge of it formed part of the primary presentation. Consequently, all thought as well as all knowledge of matter *per se* is impossible.

How the imagination leads us astray.

4. In the case of thought or representation, the imagination leads us into precisely the same inadvertency which we are led into by perception in the case of knowledge or presentation. When we perceive external objects, we usually pay so little attention to self that we seem to overlook altogether this most essential element of cognition: so when we think of, or represent, external objects, we think so little of the antecedent "me," formerly apprehended along with them, that we seem to be thinking of these objects themselves, without taking any notice of this, the necessary constituent in our original knowledge of them, and which is now a necessary constituent in our representation of them. The one oversight is the inevitable consequence of the other. We are, in the first instance, (in presentation) so

much more forcibly impressed by the presence to the mind of the things, than we are by the presence to the mind of itself, that, in the second instance, (in representation) we are much more impressed by the presence to the mind of the images of the things than we are by the presence to the mind of the thought of the self, which was apprehended along with the things whose images we are now contemplating.

Illustration.

5. For example; the man who may have made a tour, during last summer, through the Highlands of Scotland, was much more forcibly impressed by the charms of the scenery through which he passed than he was by the presence of himself whom, however, he apprehended (faintly it may be) at every turn, and in continual concomitance with all that he beheld:—so subsequently, when he recalls to mind his former tour, his imagination brings before him ideal pictures of these scenes without bringing before him, by any means, so forcibly—indeed, without *appearing* to bring before him at all, that former self, which was apprehended in constant and necessary association with every one of them.

Self must be represented just as much as it must be presented.

6. There cannot be a doubt that this illustration expresses correctly the state of the fact; but just as little can there be a doubt that, in thinking or representing what we formerly beheld, we are as much compelled by the necessary laws of reason to cogi-

PROP. XII.

tate or represent ourself in its antecedent connection with these scenes, as we were in the first instance compelled by the necessary laws of reason to apprehend this self when the objects were actually before us. And we are thus compelled; because this apprehension of self was in the first instance essential to the constitution of the cognition, and therefore the thought of this antecedent apprehension of self is absolutely necessary to the constitution of the representation. If it were impossible to know one thing without knowing two things, it would be impossible to represent one thing without representing two things; because, unless this were so, less would be representable than could be known; in other words, that would be representable which could not be known. But this contradicts Proposition XI., and is therefore a false and contradictory supposition. And the conclusion is, that we cannot think or represent to the mind our antecedent knowledge or experience of material things without thinking or representing the "me" by which they were, in the first instance, apprehended, and which was itself necessarily apprehended along with them.

Twelfth counter-proposition.

7. *Twelfth Counter-proposition.*—"Matter and its qualities *per se* are not absolutely incogitable; they admit of being conceived or represented in thought, although it may be true that they cannot be presented in knowledge."

PROP. XII.

Its character and downfall.

8. This counter-proposition expresses the inadvertency of natural thinking, and also of psychological science which comes up in the place of Counter-propositions IV. and V., when these are subverted by their corresponding propositions. This counter-proposition would rest upon an assured basis if Counter-proposition XI. were sound; because, if less could be thought of than was essential to constitute cognition, there would be nothing to prevent matter *per se* from being conceived. But Counter-proposition XI. is false, and therefore Counter-proposition XII., which is founded upon it, is false also. The one goes down before Proposition XI., and the other before Proposition XII., as contradicting the necessary truths of reason.

Matter *per se* has no chance of being thought of.

9. The psychologist sometimes argues that, although matter and its qualities *per se* cannot be imagined, they may nevertheless be thought of in some loose and indeterminate kind of way. Imagination, he may admit, cannot represent to us the material universe emancipated from all subjective or sensational admixture; but he may contend that pure thinking is competent to perform what knowledge and imagination are unable to overtake. This proposition disposes of that inconsiderate and evasive mode of arguing. It deprives matter *per se* of every chance of being conceived or represented.

PROP. XII.

It cannot be reached by the way of inference.

10. And let it not be supposed that matter *per se* can be reached *by the way of inference*. Whatever can be conceived inferentially, must be conceived as the object of *possible*, though not of actual cognition. But there is no potential knowledge, in any quarter, of matter *per se*, as has been already sufficiently established. It can be conceived only as the object of no possible knowledge; and therefore it cannot be conceived as an inference, except on the understanding that this inference is a finding of the contradictory, or of that which cannot be conceived on any terms by any intelligence.

Why the discussion respecting matter *per se* is important.

11. It may be proper at this place to remark, parenthetically, that the discussion respecting matter *per se* is interesting and important, not so much on account of any conclusion as to the independent existence or non-existence of matter which the inquiry may lead to, as on account of the truths in regard to knowing and thinking which the research brings to light. Philosophers have been too apt to overlook this consideration, and to suppose that the main object of the research was to prove something either *pro* or *con* respecting material existence. That, however, is a point of very secondary importance, and one which, at the outset, ought not to be attended to at all. The inquiry should be gone into as if it were merely the smelting process, by which the most secret and essential laws of cognition and of thought are to

be extricated from the dross of ordinary opinion, and submitted to the attention of mankind. Viewed in this light, the importance of the discussion cannot be too highly estimated. The agitation of no other question can make known to us the fundamental laws of all knowledge—the binding necessities of all reason. If any other topic will answer this purpose, let it be announced: philosophers will very readily proceed to its examination. Would people inquire directly into the laws of thought and of knowledge, by merely looking to knowledge or to thought itself, without attending to *what* is known, or to *what* is thought of? Psychology usually goes to work in this abstract fashion; but such a mode of procedure is hopeless,—as hopeless as the analogous instance by which the wits of old were wont to typify any particularly fruitless undertaking,—namely, the operation of milking a he-goat into a sieve. No milk comes in the first instance, and, *even that* the sieve will not retain! There is a loss of nothing twice over. Like the man milking, the inquirer obtains no milk in the first place; and, in the second place, he looses it, like the man holding the sieve. Modern wit has not equalled that intolerable jest, which describes exactly the predicament of our psychologists, in their attempts to ascertain the laws of thinking and knowing, by merely looking to these, considered as mental operations. Our Scottish philosophy, in particular, has presented a spectacle of this description.

PROP. XII.

PROP. XII.

Reid obtained no result, owing to the abstract nature of his inquiry, and the nothingness of his system has escaped through the sieves of all his successors. They drag for abstractions in nets composed of abstractions; and, consequently, they catch very few fish. If we would avoid this termination to our toils; if we would protect ourselves against the unpleasantness of losing no result twice over, we must go to work in a very different way. It is of no use inquiring into the laws of knowing and thinking, considered as abstract operations. We must study the contents, and not the mere form of knowledge; for the form without the contents,—the law without that which the law determines,—is elusory as the dream of a shadow. We must ask, and find out, *what* we know, and *what* we think;—in other words, we must inquire whether matter *per se* be what we know or think, or whether we have not, all along, been practising an imposition upon ourselves in imagining that this was what we knew, when, in truth, this was not what we knew. If any important conclusions are to be reached, the concrete, and not the abstract, must be the object of our investigation, and this is what these Institutes have endeavoured to keep constantly in view.

PROPOSITION XIII.

THE INDEPENDENT UNIVERSE IN THOUGHT.

The only *independent* universe which any mind or ego can think of is the universe in synthesis with some *other* mind or ego.

DEMONSTRATION.

OBJECTS *plus* a subject, or self, is the only universe which can be known (Props. I. and II.) The only universe which can be thought of is the universe which can be known (Prop. XI.) Therefore, objects *plus* a subject, or self, is the only universe which can be thought of. Consequently, whenever any mind or ego thinks of the universe as independent of itself, it must still think of it as made up of objects *plus* a subject. Therefore, the only *independent* universe which any mind or ego can think of is the universe in synthesis with some *other* mind or ego.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

PROP. XIII.

1. This proposition, like all the others in this section of the science, abstains from affirming anything as to existence. It does not state what independent universe can alone exist, but merely what independent universe can alone be thought of. Whatever controversies may still continue to prevail as to the kind of independent universe which may exist, it is submitted that this Institute settles, once and for ever, and beyond the possibility of a dispute, what the only kind of independent universe is which can be *conceived* to exist.

It speaks only of what can be conceived, not of what exists.

2. It answers a question which the reader, who is interested in speculation, may perhaps by this time be disposed to ask, after finding himself apparently debarred from the conception of any independent universe:—What universe, then, do the laws of thought permit us to cogitate as absolutely independent of ourselves? The answer is this proposition, which declares that the only universe independent of each of us, which each of us can think of, is the universe in union with some other subject than himself. Each of us can unyoke the universe (so to speak) from himself; but he can do this only by yoking it on, in thought, to some other self. The laws of all thought, and of all reason, prevent us most stringently from construing to our minds any other uni-

It answers the question —what independent universe can be thought of?

verse than this; but this kind of independent universe they permit us to construe to our heart's content. PROP. XIII.

3. Another point which this proposition clears up is this: The reader may ask, When I suppose myself removed from this sublunary scene, why do I not think of it as relapsing into that amorphous and nonsensical state in which it is declared to be when dissociated altogether from *me?* Why do I think of it as still orderly and subsistent? Why does it not drop instantly into the gulph of the contradictory? Simply because you do not think of it as dissociated from *every* me. You cannot perform the abstraction. Whenever you think of material things which are no longer before you, you will find that you are either thinking of them and yourself as these were formerly apprehended together, or that you are thinking of them in connection with some *other* self or subject. It is through the performance of the latter operation that each of us is enabled to think the universe as independent of himself. This is not a matter of choice,—a mode in which we choose to think: it is a matter of necessity,—a mode in which we cannot help thinking. It is an operation which is done for us, and in spite of us, and in obedience to our deeper genius, who laughs to see how, even while we are performing it, we imagine ourselves to be doing something very different—namely, to be thinking of the universe by itself, or out of synthesis

Why we do not think of things as amorphous when they are absent from us.

PROP. XIII.

with every intelligent subject. This latter operation cannot be performed. It is made impracticable by the law which declares that that alone can be thought of which can possibly be known. But although it cannot be performed, we can understand how its performance, if possible, would have the effect of reducing the universe to the predicament of a contradiction; because the abstraction of the "me" would empty it of the element which, by Proposition I., is essential to the constitution of all knowledge or presentation, and which, by Proposition XI., is essential to the constitution of all thought or representation.

An objection stated.

4. An objection, which at first sight may look serious, seems to lie against this proposition. It may be alleged that, in cogitating material things, each of us can cogitate merely his own individual self, which was originally apprehended in the cognition of them. It may be supposed that, no other than each person's individual self having been known or presented to him in the first instance, no other than this can be conceived or represented by him in the second instance, according to the terms of Proposition XI.

5. This objection is very easily removed. It proceeds on a misapprehension, not unnatural, of Proposition XI.; which misapprehension, however, will be completely obviated if the reader will attend to the

two restrictions of thought laid down among the observations on that proposition. Representation can, first, do anything except add to the data of cognition, an element of which no type or instance has been given, or can be given, in experience; and, secondly, it can do anything except leave out an element essential to the constitution of original cognition. But here thought is doing neither of these things. Having apprehended myself along with all that I apprehend, I am furnished with a pattern or instance, according to which I can cogitate another, or any number of other, selves doing the same; and having supplied in thought, by the supposed presence of another "me" to the universe, the element essential to its cognition, I am leaving out no ingredient essential to the formation of knowledge. And thus each individual ego, without running into a contradiction, obtains in thought a universe absolutely independent of its individual self. This kind of independent universe each of us can believe to subsist in his absence without harbouring a contradiction; but we cherish a contradiction the instant we attempt to believe in any other kind of independent universe as subsisting in our absence.

PROP. XIII.

Objection obviated. We have a single type—can suppose it repeated.

* * *

6. The reason why the universe *per se* is absolutely unthinkable, is because neither we nor any intelligence has, or can have, any type or model whereby to construct it in thought. Had we been furnished

Why we cannot cogitate matter *per se*—no single type.

PROP. XIII.

with any single instance of such a type, we could multiply in thought that type as often as we pleased, and represent to ourselves a world, or a plurality of worlds, *per se*. There is no transgression of the laws of thought involved in the supposition that what has once been known may be repeated—and repeated in a great variety of fashions. But we have not, and cannot have, a single type given us whereby to cogitate matter *per se* at all. We are not supplied even with an example of a grain of sand *per se*. Proposition I. settles that point. And, therefore, no model whatever of matter *per se* being presentable to us in knowledge, the material universe *per se* must for ever remain absolutely irrepresentable by us in thought.

We have a single type of objects + subject—can conceive other cases of this.

7. But the case is totally different in regard to the universe *mecum*. In thinking of objects *plus* another subject, we are restrained by no such incapacity as that which paralyses us when we would cogitate the universe *plus* no subject at all. Each of us has had an instance of this synthesis given to him in his own knowledge or experience. Each man apprehends the universe (or parts of it) with the addition of himself; and therefore there is nothing whatever to prevent him from conceiving the same process to take place in an unlimited number of other instances. He can think of the universe *plus* another self *ad libitum*; because, so soon as the con-

ception of any one case is obtained, the conception of a plurality of analogous cases is also compassed. The conception of one necessarily brings along with it the conception of many. PROP. XIII.

8. These Institutes will scarcely be charged with loose argumentation, or with a disposition to flinch from any consequence to which their premises may lead. All that they are concerned about is, that their deductions should be correctly drawn—not that they should be approved of when drawn: that issue must be as fortune may determine. The plea, therefore, which would limit each individual to the cogitation of his own individual self is rejected, not because it is unpalatable, but because it is illogical. We are as much inclined to deal strictly with this point as any of our readers can be. The system, then, admits that each man can be cognisant, or have experience, only of his own individual self, and only of the universe which is presented to that individual self. The question, therefore, may be asked, How can he conceive any other self than this individual, or any other universe than that which this individual is in contact with? Here it is that the distinction between the simply inconceivable by us, and the absolutely inconceivable in itself, comes to our assistance. The simply inconceivable by us falls (see Introd. § 68) under the category of the conceivable. We can conceive it as that which is conceivable from Further explanation of how one self can conceive another self.

PROP. XIII.

involving no contradiction. Hence, although another self is not knowable by me (in the sense of *being experienced*), and is, moreover, not conceivable by me (in the sense of being conceived as that of which I have had experience), still I can conceive another self as conceivable—that is to say, as non-contradictory. I can do this, because I know and conceive my individual self, and the things by which I am surrounded. But what I can think of as taking place in one instance, I can think of as taking place in an infinitude of instances; or, what is the same thing, I can think of that one case as not the only case of the kind which is possible—in other words, as not exhausting the capabilities of nature in that particular direction. What is possible at all is possible to any extent. *My* consciousness is both possible and actual, and therefore *other* consciousnesses are possible; and, by a very easy and reasonable determination of the mind, I can admit them to be actual. With their actual existence, however, I have at present nothing to do. What I am undertaking to show is, not that other *me's* besides *me* exist, but only that I can form a conception of other *me's* besides *me*, and that this is what each of us (supposing that there is more than one of us) can do. It is, moreover, to be borne particularly in mind, that the other egos or subjects which are conceived by us, are always conceived as the universal part of all their cognitions, just as one's own *me* is always known and conceived

as the universal part of one's own cognitions. Each of us having the type or pattern, can construct the conception *ad libitum*. PROP. XIII.

9. One word on the subject of Belief. Belief is the determination of the mind to accept as actual fact, or as actual existence, on grounds of probable evidence, whatever the compulsory reason has declared to be possible—that is, has shown to be non-contradictory. But, according to psychology, and more especially according to our Scottish philosophy of common sense, belief is the determination of the mind to accept as actual fact, or as actual existence, on the evidence of ordinary thinking, that which the compulsory reason has proved to be impossible and contradictory. A word on Belief.

10. Another difficulty has been started. Proposition I. affirms that, along with whatever a man is cognisant of, he must be cognisant of himself. In thinking, therefore, of the independent universe as a synthesis of objects *plus* another subject, must he not take himself into account as well, and must not the total synthesis of thought, in that case, be objects *plus* another me *plus* me? It is true that the synthesis which each of us cogitates is of this character. But the explanation is this: Propositions I. and II. lay down the essential constituents of all cognition, and, consequently, of all conception. These elements Another difficulty obviated.

PROP. XIII.

are not necessarily more than objects *plus one* self. This is all that is necessary to constitute a case of knowledge or of thought. These propositions enunciate that universal truth. Therefore, although I cannot cogitate things *plus* another self without taking my own self into account as well, yet I can perfectly well understand how such a case (to wit, a case of objects *plus* another subject) should take place without my having anything to do with it. There is no necessity whatever for *my* taking into account any other self, when I am cognisant of things *plus* my individual me; and, therefore, there is no necessity for another self to take *me* into account, when he is cognisant of himself and the things by which he is surrounded. All this I can understand perfectly well. And, therefore, although it is true that I must cogitate myself whenever I think of another self in union with things, still I can conceive that other self, and the things he is cognisant of, to subsist, although I were entirely withdrawn, or had never been called into existence. But I cannot conceive things to subsist without any "me" in my supposed annihilation. For to conceive this would be to conceive a contradiction—something from which the grounds of all conceivability had been removed. If the reader will consider that the general thesis laid down in Propositions I. and II. is simply this, that things and some *one* self are necessary to constitute the unit or minimum of all possible knowledge, and, consequently,

of all possible conception, he will very readily surmount the difficulty which is here noticed, and will perceive that there is nothing in the present proposition which is at all at variance with anything that has gone before. PROP. XIII.

11. The counter-proposition only remains to be appended. After what has been said, it will be unnecessary to offer any remarks in refutation of this contradictory product of ordinary thinking, which psychology has taken under her protection. *Thirteenth counter-proposition*: "The independent universe which each of us thinks of is the universe, out of synthesis or connection with every mind, subject, or self." Thirteenth counter-proposition.

PROPOSITION XIV.

THE PHENOMENAL IN COGNITION.

There is no mere phenomenal in cognition; in other words, the phenomenal by itself is absolutely unknowable and inconceivable.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE first premiss fixes *the definition of phenomenon*. "Whatever can be known or conceived only when something else is known or conceived along with it, is a phenomenon, or the phenomenal." But whatever can only be so known or conceived, cannot be known or conceived by itself. Therefore there is no mere phenomenal in cognition; in other words, the phenomenal by itself is absolutely unknowable and inconceivable.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

Fourteenth counter-proposition.

1. *Fourteenth Counter-proposition.*—"There is nothing *but* the phenomenal in cognition; in other words, the phenomenal alone is knowable and conceivable by us."

PROP. XIV.

2. It must have occurred to the reader before now, that the best way of attaining to correct opinions on most metaphysical subjects, is by finding out what has been said on any given point by the psychologists, and then by saying the very opposite. In such cases we are sure to be right in at least ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. Indeed, no better recipe than this can be prescribed for those who are desirous of compassing the truth. The case before us is a striking exemplification of the infallibility of this rule, which is established by all the other positions laid down in these Institutes, although, in most instances, not quite so obtrusively. This counter-proposition gives expression to one of those hereditary commonplaces, which the science of the human mind has an especial pleasure in parading; the opinion, to wit, that our faculties are competent to deal only with the phenomenal—that is, the unsubstantial and unreal. What cause this dogma may be due to—whether to a mock humility, or to an inexactitude of thinking, or to both—is not worth inquiring, for it is manifestly false and contradictory.

A good rule for reaching truth on metaphysical topics.

3. This merely may be said, that psychology has been permitted to indulge in this solemn species of trifling a great deal too long, and that it is high time it should be put a stop to. Why suppose that the *wrong* side of things is turned invariably towards *us*; and that all that we can know is not worth knowing,

The psychological trifling with truth ought to be put a stop to.

PROP. XIV.

while all worth knowing is hidden impenetrably from our comprehension? This morbid supposition is not humility—it is either laziness or stupidity trying to look respectable in the garb of a mock modesty; or else it is scepticism assuming the airs of superior wisdom; or else it is timidity pretending to be caution; or else it is hypocrisy endeavouring to curry favour with the Governor of the universe, by disparaging the faculties which He has endowed us with. Whatever it is, it ought no longer to be endured. Our intellectual tether is sufficiently short without any misdirected psychological curtailing. The agnoiology will show that we are quite weak and ignorant enough without affecting to be still more ignorant and weak.

The main object of this and three following propositions.

4. The restoration of the important philosophical terms "phenomenon" and "substance" to their true and original significations, by supplying (*inter alia*) the only definitions which afford any conception of them, is the main object of this and the three following propositions. In connection with no metaphysical words, whether considered in themselves or in their history, does greater confusion and incorrectness of thought prevail; and therefore, if speculative science is ever to acquire solidity and exactitude, it is essential that this mistiness and error should be removed.

PROPOSITION XV.

WHAT THE PHENOMENAL IN COGNITION IS.

Objects, whatever they may be, are the phenomenal in cognition; matter in all its varieties is the phenomenal in cognition; thoughts or mental states whatsoever are the phenomenal in cognition; the universal is the phenomenal in cognition; the particular is the phenomenal in cognition; the ego, or mind, or subject, is the phenomenal in cognition.

DEMONSTRATION.

OBJECTS, whatever they may be, can be known only along with self or the subject (by Prop. I.); matter in all its varieties can be known only along with self or the subject (by Prop. I.); thoughts or mental states whatsoever can be known only along with self or the subject (by Prop. I.); the universal can be known only along with the particular (by Prop.

PROP. XV.

VI.); the particular can be known only along with the universal (by Prop. VI.) The ego, or mind, or subject, or oneself, can be known only along with some thing or thought or determinate condition of one kind or another (by Prop. IX.) Therefore all these, conformably to the definition of phenomenon, are the phenomenal in cognition.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

A peculiarity in the counter-proposition.

1. In this case the counter-proposition is somewhat peculiar. In expression it is coincident with the proposition, but in meaning it is diametrically opposed to it. Psychology holds that we are cognisant only of the phenomenal, because our faculties are inadequate to reach the substantial. Hence it holds that we are cognisant of the things enumerated in the proposition only as phenomena. The proposition, on the other hand, holds that we are cognisant of these things as phenomena, not because we are incompetent to apprehend the substantial (see Props. XVI., XVII.), but because we can be cognisant of each of them only along with something else—that is, can be cognisant of each part only along with its counterpart. So that the error of psychology does not lie in the affirmation that we are cognisant of material, or other, objects only as phenomena, or of ourselves only as a phenomenon (the proposition affirms the same); but it lies in the

attribution of this cognisance to a wrong cause—namely, to the peculiar structure of our faculties, which is supposed to debar us from any better species of knowledge; whereas the truth is, that our incompetency to apprehend each of these things otherwise than as phenomenal, lies in the necessary and universal structure of reason, considered simply as such; for intelligence, of whatever order it may be, must apprehend merely as phenomenal that which it can apprehend only in union with something else—this being the very definition of phenomenon, that it is that which can be known only along with something else. Therefore, to bring out fully the error involved in the counter-proposition, it must be expressed in the following terms, stated as briefly as possible:— PROP. XV.

2. *Fifteenth Counter-proposition.*—"Objects, material or otherwise—thoughts or mental states whatsoever—the ego, or mind—all these are the phenomenal in cognition, not because each of them can be known only as part of a completed synthesis, but because our faculties are limited to the comprehension of mere phenomena, and can hold no converse with the substantial." Fifteenth counter-proposition.

3. This counter-proposition is not only erroneous; it is contradictory. It contradicts the only conception of phenomenon which it is possible to form, and to which expression has been given in the definition. The counter-proposition involves a contradiction.

PROP. XV.

The counter-proposition declares that each and all of the things specified in the proposition are known *only* as phenomenal. But nothing can be known *only* as phenomenal; because (by Definition) the phenomenal is that which can be known only along with something else; and therefore to suppose a thing to be known *only* as phenomenal would be to suppose it known both with, and without, something else being known along with it, which of course is contradictory. What the parts of cognition enumerated in the proposition are, when known in their synthetic totality, is declared in Proposition XVII.; the intervening proposition (XVI.) being required to show that there *is* a substantial in cognition.

PROPOSITION XVI.

THE SUBSTANTIAL IN COGNITION.

There is a substantial in cognition; in other words, substance, or the substantial, is knowable, and is known by us.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE first premiss fixes the *definition of known substance:* "Whatever can be known without anything else being, of necessity, known along with it, is a known substance." But some such thing must be known, otherwise all knowledge would be impossible; because it is obvious that no knowledge could ever take place, if, in order to know a thing, we always required to know something else; and if, in order to know the thing and the something else, we again required to know something else, and so on *in infinitum*. Under such an interminable process knowledge could never arise. But knowledge does arise. Therefore a point must be reached at which

PROP. XVI.

something is known without anything else being, of necessity, known along with it. And this something, whatever it may turn out to be, is known substance, according to the definition. Therefore there is a substantial in cognition; in other words, substance is knowable, and is known by us.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

This proposition proves nothing as to *existing* substance.

1. The words "known" and "in cognition" are here inserted (as on other occasions) in order to guard against the supposition that this definition fixes anything, or that this proposition proves anything, in regard to *existing* substance. Known substance may subsequently turn out to be coincident with existing substance; but this is not to be assumed, and it is not assumed at this place. All that is defined is known substance, and all that is proved is that there is a known substance, not that known substance is existing substance.

Neither does it declare the nature of known substance.

2. The reader is also requested to bear in mind that this proposition says nothing as to *what* known substance is; it merely states and proves that there is such a thing. What the thing is—in other words, what corresponds to the definition—is declared in the next proposition. This remark is made lest any perplexity or dissatisfaction should be occasioned by the vagueness which necessarily hangs over a state-

ment which merely announces *that* a certain thing is, without announcing *what* it is. This vagueness of statement must communicate a corresponding vagueness of thought to the reader's mind; and he may be uncertain whether he has apprehended the whole meaning of the proposition. He has apprehended its full meaning if he will take it literally as it stands, and be pleased to wait for further light as to *what* the substantial in cognition is until he comes to Proposition XVII. PROP. XVI.

3. The theory of knowing would be very incomplete unless it embraced an explanation of certain words in connection with which the utmost laxity of thought has at all times prevailed, and around which the most confused and fruitless controversies have perpetually revolved. Such words are "substance," "phenomenon," "the absolute," "the relative." The loose and erroneous thinking which is attached to these terms, both in the popular mind and in psychological science, is what lies beyond all the powers of description to exaggerate. Definite articles, therefore, settling their meaning exactly, are quite indispensable in a work which professes to lay down the institutes of all metaphysical thinking, and to supply the standards by a reference to which all vagrant cogitation may be at once pulled up, and all controversies cut short. These articles, moreover, are necessary steps in the inquiry, because its ulti- Reasons for introducing this proposition.

PROP. XVI.

mate aim is to ascertain whether, and how far, the substantial and the phenomenal, the absolute and the relative, in cognition, equate with the substantial and the phenomenal, the absolute and the relative, in existence.

The position of natural thinking in regard to this proposition.

4. From what has been said, it will be obvious that the question which this proposition answers is simply this: Is there any such thing as known substance?—a point which it is of the utmost importance to determine, the definition of known substance being at the same time given. And the answer which the proposition returns to this question is the affirmative —yes. Now it is remarkable that ordinary thinking also answers this question in the affirmative; and therefore, in so far as ordinary thinking is concerned, there is no counter-proposition, and, consequently, the natural opinion on this point stands in no need of correction. The contradictory inadvertency of natural thinking only comes to light when it condescends upon *what* known substance is. Vulgar opinion concedes that there are known substances; and so far vulgar opinion is exempt from error. But ask vulgar opinion what known substance is, and vulgar opinion is instantly at fault. It declares that logs of wood and brickbats, and articles of that description, are known substances. Such a statement is contradictory; because known substance, according to the definition, is that, and only that, which

can be known or thought of without anything else being known or thought of along with it. But logs of wood or brickbats cannot be thus known or thought of (as will appear from Prop. XVII., if it is not already evident to the reader); and therefore the assertion which declares that these, and such things, are known substance, is false and contradictory. But still, in so far as the present proposition is concerned, it encounters no opposition from popular opinion; and therefore to this extent our natural modes of thought are neither inadvertent nor erroneous. To find the exact counter-proposition which Proposition XVI. subverts, we must look to the deliverances of psychology. PROP. XVI.

5. *Sixteenth Counter-proposition.* — "There is," says psychology, "no substantial in cognition: we are not competent to know or to form any conception of substance." Psychology then adds, somewhat inconsistently, that substance is to be conceived as the occult substratum of manifest qualities, the unknown support of known accidents. But inasmuch as we are not considering at present what the nature of substance is, but only the state of the fact as to our knowledge of it, all remarks on this latter part of the psychological doctrine must be reserved for a subsequent occasion (see Prop. XVII., Obs. 8, 9, 10.) Sixteenth counter-proposition.

6. This counter-proposition contradicts reason,

PROP. XVI.

Its downfall.

because it advances a doctrine which, if true, would render all cognition impossible. Unless the mind could know something without knowing anything more — in other words, unless it could know substance (for known substance, according to the definition, is whatever can be known without anything more being known), no knowledge, as has been stated in the demonstration, could arise; because, in that case, the mind, before it could know anything, would be eternally under the necessity of knowing something more; and this process never coming to an end, knowledge could never come to a beginning. But knowledge does come to a beginning; it takes place. Therefore the mind can know something without knowing anything besides; or, more shortly, it is cognisant of substance; and the counter-proposition which denies this truth can no more keep its ground against these considerations, than a soap-bubble can withstand a thunderbolt.

Defence of definition of known substance.

7. A moderate degree of reflection may convince any one that the definition of known substance here presented, is the only true and tenable and intelligible definition of it which can be formed. No other conception of known or knowable substance can be formed than that it is that which can subsist in thought without anything else subsisting in thought along with it. Whatever can thus stand or subsist is certainly a known substance—a conceived sub-

sistence; whether it be an existing substance is a totally different question, and one with which, as has been said again and again, we have at present no concern. A very distinct meaning can be attached to the word substance when thus understood; but every attempt to understand it in any other sense, is sure to result in understanding it in no sense at all. PROP. XVI.

8. Any further notices, critical or historical, respecting substance, will come in more appropriately under the next proposition. Meanwhile, this may be remarked, that the definition of it here laid down is due to Spinoza, who thus defines substance: "Per substantiam intelligo id, quod in se est, et per se concipitur; hoc est, id cujus conceptus non indiget conceptu alterius rei, a quo formari debeat"*—that is, "By substance I understand that which is conceived as standing alone and undetached; in other words, substance is that whose conception does not require to be assisted or supplemented by the conception of anything else." This translation is not strictly literal, but it gives Spinoza's meaning with the utmost exactitude, and more intelligibly than any closer verbal rendering could do. Spinoza's mistake lay in his prematurely giving out this proposition as the definition of existing, and not simply as the definition of known, substance. This definition is due to Spinoza.

* *Ethices, pars prima*, Definit. III.

PROPOSITION XVII.

WHAT THE SUBSTANTIAL IN COGNITION IS.

Object *plus* subject is the substantial in cognition; matter *mecum* is the substantial in cognition; thoughts or mental states whatsoever, *together* with the self or subject, are the substantial in cognition; the universal, in union with the particular, is the substantial in cognition; the ego or mind in any determinate condition, or with any thing or thought present to it, is the substantial in cognition. This synthesis, thus variously expressed, is the substantial, and the only substantial, in cognition.

DEMONSTRATION.

OBJECT *plus* subject—matter *mecum*—thoughts or mental states whatsoever, together with the self or subject—the ego or mind in any determinate condi-

tion, or with any thing or thought present to it—the universal in union with the particular—these varieties of expression declare what constitutes the only synthesis which can be known or conceived without anything else being known or conceived along with it (see in particular Props. II. III. VI. IX. XIII.) Therefore this synthesis (thus variously expressed) is the substantial, and the only substantial, in cognition, conformably to the definition of substance given in Prop. XVI. PROP. XVII.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Seventeenth Counter-proposition.*—" Object *plus* subject—matter *mecum*—thoughts or mental states whatsoever, together with the self or subject—the universal in union with the particular—this synthesis, thus variously expressed, is merely the phenomenal in cognition. The substantial is rather the separate members of the synthesis than the total synthesis itself. Thus object apart from subject—matter apart from mind—the ego apart from the non-ego, and separated from all thoughts and determinations—the non-ego divorced from the ego, and existing as it best can,—these are the substantial, not indeed in human knowledge, for human knowledge cannot lay hold of the substantial, but in reality, *in rerum natura*. They are the occult bases of all the phenomena, intellectual and material, which Seventeenth counter-proposition.

PROP. XVII.

alone come before us; and among these, and equally phenomenal in its character, falls to be ranked what is called the synthesis in cognition of objects and subject—matter and me—mind with thoughts or things present to it—the universal and the particular —the ego and the non-ego."

Conglomerate character of the counter-proposition.

2. This counter-proposition is a conglomeration of epistemology and ontology, with a slight tincture of common opinion, and a large menstruum of psychological doctrine. To disentangle its contents, therefore, it must be put through a refining process —first, in order to clear it from all ontological admixture, and to disengage and exhibit that part of it which psychology opposes to the proposition; and, secondly, in order to disengage and exhibit that part of it which ordinary thinking opposes to the proposition.

Elimination of its ontological surplusage.

3. *First*, Part of this counter-proposition is obviously ontological. Although psychology professes to have no faith in ontology, and disclaims all connection with so unapproachable a department of metaphysics, she nevertheless retains such a hold over this unreclaimed province as enables her, unless vigorously withstood, to disconcert the operations of the exact reason, and to impede the progress of genuine speculation. Thus, when the question is put, What is the substantial in cognition? psycho-

logy is not content with answering that there is no substantial in cognition, and that what is supposed to be such is merely the phenomenal: she goes on to declare what the substantial *in existence* is; and thus people's attention is called off from the proper and only point under consideration, while the truth, which is not over-willing to be caught at any time, slips quietly away during the confusion. "We first raise a dust," says Berkeley, "and then complain that we cannot see"—a very true remark. The speculative thinker asks a question about knowledge, whereupon the psychologist instantly kicks up a turmoil about existence, so that neither of them can see what they are looking for. The question, What is the substantial *in cognition?* is no more answered by saying that some occult substratum of qualities is the substantial *in existence*, than the question, Who is the Great Mogul? is answered by the reply that her Majesty Queen Victoria is the Sovereign of England. We therefore throw overboard, in the mean time, the ontological surplusage contained in the counter-proposition, and limit it to the relevant averment "that objects *plus* a subject is not the substantial, but is the mere phenomenal, in cognition."

4. The contradiction involved in the counter-proposition thus restricted is instantly brought to light by an appeal to the definitions of substance and phenomenon (Prop. XVI. Dem., Prop. XIV. Dem.)

PROP. XVII.

Its contradictory character exposed in so far as it is psychological.

The known substantial is whatever, and only whatever, can be known or thought of without anything else being known or thought of along with it. Does anything else require to be known or thought of along with objects *plus* a subject, or along with matter *mecum*, or along with the universal + the particular? It is obvious that nothing else does (see Props. II. III. VI.) Does anything more require to be apprehended than the ego or oneself in some determinate condition? Nothing more requires to be apprehended (Prop. IX.) Therefore this synthesis, however it may be expressed, is the substantial in cognition, and is established as such on necessary grounds of reason; and consequently the counter-proposition is the denial of a necessary truth of reason.

Again: The phenomenal is whatever, and only whatever, can be known or thought of only when something else is known or thought of along with it. Can objects *plus* a subject—or can matter *mecum*—or can the universal + the particular—or can the ego or oneself in some determinate condition—can the synthesis of these be known only when something else is known along with it? No indeed. The synthesis can be known by itself, and unsupplemented by anything further. Therefore this synthesis is not the phenomenal in cognition, and is proved not to be this on necessary principles of reason; and consequently the counter-proposition is an affirmation

which contradicts a necessary truth of reason. Thus it involves a mental contradiction, whether looked at in its negative or in its affirmative aspect.

The counter-proposition considered in so far as it is the product of natural thinking.

5 *Secondly*, We have now to consider what part of the counter-proposition stands opposed to the proposition as the product of natural, and not of psychological, thinking. It is sometimes difficult to determine what is a spontaneous mode, and what is an acquired habit, of thought, because psychological doctrine frequently mingles its contaminating waters with the not over-clear current of popular thinking, until men imagine that they are entertaining naturally, and of their own accord, some dogma for which they were indebted to a perverse training in what is called "mental philosophy." In the present instance, however, it is not difficult to distinguish the natural from the psychological judgment. Psychology tries to persuade people that in all their dealings with themselves and the universe, they never come across anything substantial—that mere qualities or phenomena are the objects of their contemplation. But the world has not been imposed upon by this consecrated nonsense, against which it is unnecessary to argue; for, let psychologists preach, and let their followers believe as they will, it is certain that no man, in sober earnest, and if put upon oath, would ever say that he had got down, and fairly digested, that stone.

PROP. XVII.

The exact point in the counter-proposition which natural thinking opposes to the proposition.

6. In the counter-proposition it was stated that "the substantial is rather the separate members of the synthesis of objects *plus* a subject (matter *mecum*) than the total synthesis itself; but that these were not the substantial in cognition, but only in existence." To find the exact part of the counter-proposition which natural thinking adopts and sets up in antagonism to the proposition, we have merely to leave out the word "rather," and to affirm that "the substantial is the separate members of the synthesis, or, at any rate, is one of the factors of the synthesis—that, namely, which we call *objects* or *matter*—and this is the substantial both in cognition and in existence." Or, stated more shortly, the exact point of the counter-proposition, which is conformable to ordinary opinion, is this: "mere material objects are known substances."

Contradiction in the counter-proposition, in so far as it is the product of natural thinking.

7. The test of the truth of this statement is, as before, the definition of known substance. Can material things be known without anything else being known along with them? No, they cannot; because the "me" must always be known along with them (by Prop. I.) Therefore material things are not known substances—they are not the substantial in cognition, whatever they may be in existence; and consequently natural thinking, which declares that they are this, is convicted of entertaining a contradictory inadvertency. Thus the question, as to

what is and what is not the substantial in thought, is brought to a short but very decisive issue. The synthesis so often referred to, and which henceforward, for the sake of brevity, shall be generally denominated *object-plus-subject*, is the substantial, and the only substantial, in knowledge and in thought. PROP. XVII.

8. The psychological opinion as to existing substance is, that this is the occult substratum of qualities. Such an opinion is quite harmless, if taken along with the two following explanations: first, that the substance for which it contends does not answer its purpose; and, secondly, that this substance is merely the phenomenal. A word must be said on each of these points, in order to expose the hollowness of the psychological doctrine, for its plausibility causes it to be a trap to unwary or inexact thinkers. Psychological opinion as to *existing* substance.

9. *First*, This opinion does not answer its purpose. Qualities, says psychology, must have a support, phenomena must have something to inhere in; they cannot be conceived as subsisting by themselves, therefore they have an occult substratum, and this occult substratum is substance. Well, let this postulation be granted. Can the qualities, together with their substance, be now conceived as subsisting by themselves? Not one whit better than before. They still (that is, the qualities and the substance together) require an additional supplement before First, It does not answer its purpose.

PROP. XVII.

they can be conceived as subsisting; they require to be supplemented in knowledge, or in thought, by the known or conceived "me" before they can be known or thought of at all (Props. I. and XIII.) It is thus obvious that psychological substance does not answer the purpose for which it was intended. It was postulated because the qualities could not be conceived as standing alone; but just as little can the qualities *plus* the substance be conceived as standing alone; therefore the hypothesis is good for nothing. It offers to the material qualities a support which breaks down under them—a very questionable kindness.

Secondly, It places before us the mere phenomenal.

10. *Secondly*, This opinion is, moreover, misleading: it places before us the mere phenomenal and calls it the substantial. Whatever can be known or thought of only when something else is known or thought of along with it is the phenomenal (see Definition). Phenomena, with the addition of the substratum, which psychology calls substance, can be known or thought of only when the ego is known or thought of along with them (Props. I. and XII.) Therefore the synthesis of phenomena and psychological substance is the mere phenomenal. With this proviso, then, that the psychological hypothesis does not answer its purpose, and that, while professing to give us some conception, however inadequate, of the substantial, it places before us the mere phenomenal, strict speculation can have no objection to

concede to psychology as many occult substrata of qualities as she may choose to demand. One or one thousand is a matter of absolute indifference. PROP. XVII.

11. Lest it should be supposed that these Institutes are obnoxious to the same sentence of reprehension which has just been pronounced upon psychology, inasmuch as it may be said that they too represent substance as constituted by a synthesis of phenomena (object + subject), the following difference must be pointed out, and carefully borne in mind. The charge against psychology is, that the substance for which she contends is no substance at all, but is the mere phenomenal, because it requires to be supplemented in thought by something more —namely, by the "me;" whereas the substantial, for which strict speculation contends, is undoubtedly a substance in cognition (whatever it may be in existence); because, although it may be an aggregate of mere phenomena, it can and does, nevertheless, subsist in thought without any else subsisting there along with it; and thus it corresponds to the definition of known substance, which is all that is required to bear out the truth of the statement advanced in Proposition XVII. Any one may convince himself, without much difficulty, that he can think of things *plus* himself without thinking of anything more (and can therefore conceive the substantial); and also that he cannot think of anything less than this without The institutional conception of known substance.

PROP. XVII.

thinking of something more; and, consequently, that whatever he thinks of as less than this completed synthesis, is thought of as the phenomenal, in conformity with the definition of phenomenon.

History of distinction between substance and phenomenon—its terms have been reversed.

12. This article may be appropriately concluded by some brief notices of the history of this distinction between substance and phenomenon. In the first place, the most remarkable circumstance connected with it — as may have struck the reader from what has been already said—is the direct transposition of its terms which the distinction, as originally propounded, has sustained at the hands of psychology. The synthesis of object-plus-subject is the substantial (the substantial at least in cognition); while its constituents—object on the one hand, and subject on the other—are the mere phenomenal in cognition: this is undoubtedly the true, the intelligible, and, moreover, the ancient doctrine in regard to substance and phenomenon. But psychology holds that this synthesis is the mere phenomenal, and that its constituents—object on the one hand, and subject on the other—are the substantial, in existence. But, inasmuch as psychology can scarcely be supposed to maintain that something of which we have no sort of conception, either adequate or inadequate, is the existing substantial, psychology must be held to teach that we have some vague and glimmering kind of notion of these in their separation, as the substantial

in cognition, as well as in existence. And thus, as has been said, the distinction has been directly reversed. Psychology declares that to be the phenomenal which speculation declares to be the substantial, and conversely. No transposition can be more exact, in spite of the psychological asseveration that the substantial lies altogether beyond the limits of knowledge and of thought. That must be taken as a mere *façon de parler*. There cannot be a doubt that the psychologist regards *solidity* as convertible with substance,—as we all do in our ordinary or unspeculative moments. PROP. XVII.

13. Irrespective of the inconvenience caused by the reversal of the terms of an important philosophical distinction, this psychological doctrine, as has been already sufficiently shown, is erroneous and contradictory. Objects, whatever they may be, are not the substantial in cognition, because they cannot stand in cognition by themselves, or *per se* (Props. I. II.) The subject is not the substantial in cognition, because it cannot stand in cognition by itself, or *per se* (Prop. IX.) Therefore these are the phenomenal in cognition. But the synthesis of object-plus-subject is the substantial in cognition, because this, and this alone, will stand in cognition by itself, or *per se*. This alone can be known without anything more being known. The reader may thus perceive at a glance how flagrantly erroneous a system that Errors caused by this reversal

PROP. XVII.

must be which teaches (as all psychology does) a doctrine directly the reverse of this.

Substance and phenomenon originally bore the signification assigned to them here.

14. There was, however, unquestionably a time when the terms of this distinction were kept in their proper places, and understood in their correct signification. Allowance being made (see Prop. X. Obs. 10) for the vagueness and ambiguity which pervade the older speculations, it may be confidently affirmed that Plato and his predecessors understood the terms substance and phenomenon in the retrieved sense which these Institutes have assigned to them. To bear out this assertion, we must show what the older philosophers understood by phenomenon and by substance: *first*, in reference to cognition; and, *secondly*, in reference to existence, although it is only in reference to the former that we are at present concerned critically with their opinions.

The known phenomenal, according to the older systems.

15. In the older systems, the phenomenal (*φαινόμενον*) was a synonym for the sensible (*αἰσθητόν*), and both of these were exactly equivalent to *inchoate*—that is, begun, but not completed, cognition; in other words, to cognition, which was not cognition, until supplemented by the element (*εἶδος* or *ἰδέα*) required to complete it. Thus the phenomenal was laid down as that which could be known or conceived only when something else was known or conceived along with it. But this is precisely the definition of phenomenon

given in these Institutes. And thus there is an exact coincidence of opinion between the older systems and the present work, in so far as the conception of the phenomenal is concerned.

16. The same coincidence may be easily shown in regard to the conception of known substance. In the older systems, the substantial in cognition (*τὸ ὄν*) was a synonym for the intelligible (*νοητόν*), and both terms were equivalent to *completed* cognition; that is, to whatever could be known or thought of without anything else being known or thought of along with it. But this is precisely the definition of known substance given in these Institutes.

The known substantial according to the older systems.

17. So in regard to the phenomenal, not simply in cognition, but in existence. In the older systems, the usual synonym for this was the Becoming (*τὸ γεγνόμενον*); that is, inchoate existence (just as the sensible, *αἰσθητόν*, stood for inchoate cognition): in other words, existence which is not existence until supplemented by something else. And thus, in the intention, at least, of the older systems, the definition of the existing phenomenal was this: The existing phenomenal, or phenomenal existence, is whatever can exist only along with something else. In like manner, the substantial, considered not simply in cognition, but in existence, had for its synonym true Being (*τὸ ὄντως ὄν*), and was held to be equivalent to

A word upon *existing* substance and phenomenon.

PROP. XVII.

completed existence (just as the intelligible, νοητόν, ἰδεος, or ἰδέα, stood for completed cognition); so that the definition of the existing substantial would be this: The existing substantial, or substantial existence, is whatever can exist without anything else existing along with it. There was thus an exact harmony or parallelism between the old conceptions of known substance and existing substance, and between the old conceptions of known phenomenon and existing phenomenon. With these conceptions or definitions, in so far as existence is referred to, we have, at present, no concern. That point has been touched upon, because even this incidental mention of it may help to clear up a very obscure topic in ancient philosophy, and one on which no light is thrown in any history of speculation—the question, namely, What did Plato and his predecessors understand by the substantial in existence? They understood by this expression whatever could exist without anything else necessarily existing along with it. *What* can only so exist is a point which can be properly enucleated only in the ontology.

Two main ambiguities in the old systems.

18. The ambiguities of language which pervade the old philosophies, and have thus prevented their truth from being appreciated or understood, are mainly these two: *First*, The term τὸ ὄν (true Being) is used both in an epistemological and in an ontological acceptation; that is to say, it is employed to

designate both the substantial in cognition and the substantial in existence. This twofold use of the term would have been quite legitimate, had any critical argumentation been employed to prove the coincidence of the known substantial and the existing substantial; but no such reasoning having been resorted to, this double signification could not but be perplexing. In the same way, the term γιγνόμενον is also used indiscriminately to signify both the phenomenal in existence and the phenomenal in cognition, the proper term for the latter being the sensible (τὸ αἰσθητόν). *Secondly*, A still more serious ambiguity was this: The term τὸ ὄν, whether applied to cognition or to existence, was used indiscriminately to signify *one* member only (that is, the universal part) of the total synthesis, whether of knowledge or of existence, and also to signify the *total* synthesis, consisting of the *two* members, universal and particular. And in like manner, the words εἶδος, ἰδέα, νοητόν, seem sometimes to have stood for the *one* member only in the total synthesis of cognition (that is, for the universal part), and sometimes for the *total* synthesis, embracing the *two* factors, universal and particular. And thus the same terms came to be somewhat abusively employed to signify both the substantial (that is, the completed synthesis, consisting of the universal and the particular,—our "subject-*plus*-object") and the phenomenal (that is, a mere part of the synthesis—to wit, the universal.

PROP. XVII.

part, or our "subject"). This ambiguity has undoubtedly been the occasion of much of the perplexity of thought and confusion of exposition which abounds in the histories of philosophy.

These ambiguities accounted for.

19. It is not difficult to point out the origin of these ambiguities. The first is to be attributed to the want of a clear line of demarcation between ontology and epistemology. The second is explained by this consideration, that the universal element is so much the more important member of the two in the total synthesis (whether of cognition or of existence), inasmuch as there can be no synthesis at all without this definable and definite factor, that it was regarded as almost equivalent, singly or by itself, to the whole synthesis. It swallowed up, as it were, the other or particular factor, the varieties of which, being contingent, were incessantly changing, and being inexhaustible, were, of course, not to be defined. And hence the terms referred to (*εἶδος, ἰδέα, νοητόν*), which properly represented only *a part* of the synthesis of cognition (or the phenomenal), came also to represent the *whole* synthesis (or the substantial).

And cleared up by a reference to the Institutional doctrine.

20. If this somewhat abstruse exposition be construed into the terms which the Institutes employ to designate the substantial in cognition, the cause which has given rise to the ambiguity in question

will be understood exactly. I-myself—("the universal" of the older systems)—I-myself-with-the-addition-of-some-thing-or-thought—this synthesis, and nothing less, is the substantial in cognition, because it alone can be known without anything else being known. But the part called "I-myself" is so much the more important and essential factor of the two, that it is very apt to be regarded as constituting, *by itself*, the substantial in cognition, while the particular element, the thing or thought, is very apt to be regarded as alone constituting the phenomenal in cognition, by reason of its contingent and variable character. This, however, is obviously a mistake; because "I-myself" cannot be known unless along with some particular thing, or thought, or determination of one kind or other, any more than the thing or thought can be known unless along with *me*. So that the term "I-myself" is an expression of the phenomenal, just as much as the term "tree" or "anger" is an expression of the phenomenal. Neither of the factors can be known without the other, consequently, each of them is the phenomenal, conformably to the definition of phenomenon; but both of them can be known together without anything else being known; consequently, their synthesis is the substantial in cognition, conformably to the definition of known substance.

21. Notwithstanding these ambiguities, there can-

PROP. XVII.

Coincidence of the old speculations with the Institutes.

not be a doubt that the doctrine of known substance propounded by the older systems has much in common—is, indeed, in its spirit, identical—with the doctrine set forth in these Institutes. According to the Platonic and pre-Platonic speculations, substance is not that which is apprehended solely by means of the senses; nor is it that which is apprehended solely by means of the intellect. It is apprehended partly by sense and partly by intellect. The sensible, particular, or material element comes through the senses, the intelligible, ideal, or universal element (the "me" of the Institutes) comes through the intellect, and their synthesis is the presentation of the substantial, or real, or concrete. This doctrine need not puzzle any one who chooses to throw his eyes on the things around him, and then to consider that he is not apprehending them to the exclusion of himself, nor himself to the exclusion of them; but that he is apprehending them and himself in a synthesis which cannot be broken up in thought without breaking up and destroying the ground of all conceivability. Each of the factors, when the attempt is made to conceive it by itself, is nonsensical: the intelligible or universal element, by itself, is no less contradictory than the sensible or particular element by itself. On this point the ancient speculations appear to differ from the doctrine of the Institutes: but this may proceed merely from their being less explicit—for it is obvious that the universal without

the particular is just as inconceivable as the particular is without the universal (see Prop. VI.) Again, each of the elements is phenomenal when considered as the counterpart of the other; and, again, the two together are the known substantial, when considered *per se*, and without anything else being taken into account along with them.

An objection obviated.

22. In case it should be objected that this doctrine represents intellect equally with sense as a faculty of nonsense, inasmuch as it declares that the universal, or "me," which is the proper object of intellect, is absurd and incognisable by itself, the following explanations must be given: Intellect is not, like sense, a faculty of nonsense, for this reason, that it is competent to take cognisance of the synthesis of oneself and things (or thoughts): it apprehends both elements together, and this union is manifestly comprehensible,—although either element, without the other, is just as manifestly incomprehensible. In so far as its own mere element (the "me" dissociated from all thoughts and things) is concerned, intellect must be pronounced a faculty of the contradictory, just as the senses are of this character. Nothing short of the completed synthesis is presentable, or comprehensible by the mind,—and what more would people have?

23. To return to the consideration of substance.

PROP. XVII.

Mistakes of the historians of philosophy as to substance.

What, according to the expositors of the ancient opinions, was the Platonic doctrine in regard to substance? Misled by the ambiguities which have been noticed and cleared up, these commentators say or insinuate that, according to the ancient speculators, the substantial does not come to the mind through the senses at all—not even in part—but through some channel altogether independent of sense. It is apprehended by pure intellect alone. The senses have no part to play in placing it before the mind. They thus arrogate for their master and for themselves the possession of some purely intellectual intuition by which pure substance is gazed upon. Professing in this way to reach the truth by relinquishing the employment of *their* senses, they have advanced a doctrine which is sufficient to drive the student of philosophy out of *his*. He finds himself referred away from his senses and the sensible world to grope for Platonic substance in regions emptier than an exhausted receiver, and murkier than the darkness of Erebus. He finds himself gazing at abstractions without any eyes, and grasping nonentities without any hands; lifting up nothing upon the point of no fork; and filling with vacuity a faculty which he does not possess. This is what the student finds himself doing who studies Plato in any, or in all, of his expositors; and for this occupation, which is by no means a pleasurable one, he is indebted to their having mistaken for finished

cognitions, data which were originally laid down as elements of cognition necessarily incognisable when considered apart from each other. PROP. XVII.

24. A hereditary dogma current in all the histories of philosophy is, that the ancient speculators were in the habit of treating the senses with disdain, and of asserting that they were in no way instrumental in placing the truth before the mind. "Magni est ingenii revocare mentem a sensibus," says Cicero, coolly platonising in the shade. Very easily said; not so easily done. And supposing it done; suppose we have shown what great geniuses we are by turning away the mind from the senses,—what then? What is the next step? Doubtless the insinuation is that we shall be rewarded by a glorious intuition of Platonic substance. But did any man, did Cicero himself, ever find it so? We may confidently answer—no. No man ever came to a good end in philosophy who tried to reach the truth by casting his senses behind him, or who strove to make his way by endeavouring to get on without them. This is one of those traditional maxims which, originally a high-flavoured, although ambiguous truth, has been handed down through a long succession of philosophic vintners, not one of whom understood its spirit, until it has come to us with all its aroma evaporated—the very refuse, or last deposit, of dregs which have been depositing dregs since ever philosophy had a name. A traditional dogma about disdaining the senses.

PROP. XVII.

The true meaning of turning the mind away from the senses.

25. The true meaning of turning the mind away from the senses, is not that we should turn away from the senses and their presentations (the material world), and explore utter vacuity by means of a faculty wherewith we are not endowed; but that, holding the data of sense steadily before us, we should bring ourselves to see that a non-sensible element which we had overlooked, and which we always do overlook, or attend to very slightly in our ordinary moods, is and was, nevertheless, *there* all the while, essentially and necessarily there, and present to our mind, along with every sensible thing that comes before it—that, namely, which Plato calls an idea—that which this system calls, perhaps more intelligibly, *ourselves*. When this element is found out, the whole material universe still presents to us precisely the same appearance as before; because, of course, the mere finding out this element is by no means equivalent to putting it there. It was there all along, and it was apprehended as there all along. The only difference is, that we attended hitherto so slightly to its presence, as almost actually to think that it was not there. Hence our inadvertency in supposing that we apprehended things by and in themselves—that is, things with the element of their intelligibility, the ground of their apprehensibility taken away. This cardinal contradiction philosophy corrects. And surely common sense, when enlightened by philosophy, and not blinded, as she usually is, by psychology,

will adopt this correction as one of her own most genuine and undoubted children,—and to this extent at least, will become perfectly reconciled with speculation, and a convert to her ways of thinking. The universe presents exactly the same appearance to speculation which it does to common sense; only with this difference, that speculation sees clearly, and traces through all its consequences, the element essential to its cognition; while common sense sees this element only confusedly, or almost entirely overlooks it; and thus, unless instructed by philosophy, remains blind to all the important results which an attention to this element brings to light. PROP. XVII.

26. Such, then, is the whole meaning of the ancient injunction about the necessity of turning the mind away from the senses, if we would reach the truth. Doubtless we must do this, to the extent of perceiving that the truth does not come to us solely by the way of the senses, but that something else, which does not come to us through them, is necessary to make up the truth which the mind apprehends. Unless we turn away from the senses, and deny their sufficiency to this extent, they will inevitably mislead us—they will land us in a contradiction, as they always do in our ordinary moods; for, at such times, they make us fancy that what we apprehend is placed before us solely by their instrumentality; whereas the fact is, that they place before us only the inchoate or unin- What the ancient philosophers meant by this dogma.

PROP. XVII.

telligible part of the truth—only the contradictory element of known substance—the mind being the source which places before us the complemental part—the part (to wit itself, or rather ourselves) by which the contradiction is supplemented, and thereby removed. Further than this, to attempt to prosecute our researches in metaphysics by turning away from the senses, or to expect to reach the truth by disdaining them and their intimations, would be to embark on a very hopeless enterprise; and, moreover, to suppose that the ancient philosophers had any other meaning in view than that now stated, when they inculcated this precept, would be to treat them with very great injustice.

Contrast between speculation and psychology in their views of substance and phenomenon.

27. From these remarks, it must now be obvious to the reader (and this is the point which the observations are chiefly designed to bring out) that ancient philosophy and modern psychology stand diametrically opposed to each other in their views as to substance and phenomenon. According to the old systems, the synthesis of subject-*plus*-object (or, as they expressed it, the synthesis of the universal and the particular) is known substance, and this substance or synthesis is made up of two phenomena—two factors which are phenomenal, inasmuch as neither can be known without the other, and which are nevertheless substantial, because the two *together* can be known without anything else. The known

substantial is thus constituted by a synthesis of phenomena. Psychology, on the other hand, holds that the synthesis of subject-*plus*-object is purely phenomenal, and that its factors alone are substantial—object on the one hand apart from the subject, and the subject or mind, on the other hand, apart from all objects. The substantial is thus constituted by an analysis of phenomena. Shortly stated, the distinction is this: genuine speculation finds the known substantial in the synthesis of two phenomenals, which, in the opinion of psychology, are substantials—objects, namely, on the one hand, and subject on the other; and it finds the phenomenal in the analysis of this substantial. Psychology, on the contrary, finds the known phenomenal in the synthesis of two substantials, which, in the estimation of speculation, are phenomenals—objects, namely, on the one hand, and subject on the other; and it finds the substantial in the analysis of this phenomenal. Thus speculation gives out as the substantial what nature herself has fixed as such; and, moreover, gives out as the phenomenal the elements which result when this substantial is tampered with and broken up. Psychology, on the contrary, gives out as the substantial the elements which result when the substantial is tampered with and broken up; and, moreover, gives out as the phenomenal that which nature herself has fixed as the substantial.

PROP. XVII.

PROP. XVII.

Speculation proved to be right even by a reference to experience.

28. But dropping this somewhat technical phraseology, and looking at the question simply by the light of common sense, or experience, we may very easily see that the doctrine advocated by speculation is infinitely sounder, as well as much more intelligible, than that advanced by psychology. Let any one consider whether he does not regard the synthesis constituted by himself and surrounding things, as much more real and substantial than either himself with no objects or thoughts present to him, or than the objects or thoughts with no self in connection with them. Let him just consider that he cannot get any hold at all upon the members of this synthesis when he attempts to grasp them out of relation to each other,—indeed, that the necessities of *all* thinking prevent either factor from being apprehended without the other,—and he cannot but become a convert to the opinion now expressed. It seems unreasonable to regard as the substantial that which no possible intelligence can have any cognisance of. This consideration brings the question to a short and decisive settlement, and must surely procure a decision in favour of the speculative, as distinguished from the psychological, pleading. It is also to be hoped that these remarks may help to restore their proper and original signification to the philosophical terms, substance and phenomenon.

PROPOSITION XVIII.

THE RELATIVE IN COGNITION.

There is no *mere* relative in cognition: in other words, the relative *per se*, or by itself, is, of necessity, unknowable and unknown.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE demonstration commences with *the definition of the relative*, which is nearly identical with that of the phenomenal. "The relative is whatever can be known or conceived only when a correlative is known or conceived along with it." But that which can be known or conceived only when a correlative is known or conceived along with it cannot be known or conceived by itself. Therefore there is no *mere* relative in cognition; in other words, the relative *per se*, or by itself, is, of necessity, unknowable and unknown.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. Although this and the three following propositions are mere repetitions of the four immediately

PROP. XVIII.

preceding ones, several good reasons may be alleged for introducing them. The student of philosophy is never more perplexed than when he is brought into contact, again and again, with the same error expressed in different language, and with the same controversy carried on under an altered nomenclature. In such cases he is perplexed, because the new phraseology leads him to suppose that something different from what had formerly been before him is being treated of. When he knows that this is not something different, but the same, he is perplexed no longer. To obviate, therefore, this cause of embarrassment, it is proper to follow out the same error through all the disguises which it may assume, in order to show that, under all its *aliases*, it is merely an old acquaintance with a new face, or rather the same convict trying to impose upon us in a different dress. Error seems to be as tenacious of existence as truth. No sooner is it demolished under one form than it comes alive again under another. It steals, serpent-like, through the world, and, even when convicted, it usually escapes with the loss of little more than the mere skin upon its back. That is hung up *in terrorem*, but the wearer wanders on in another suit, wily, protean, and inexterminable. It is, therefore, the part of all well-wishers to the truth to keep a vigilant look-out upon the movements of this incorrigible vagrant,—to give notice of its approach, and to unmask it even when it is

The same error is continually re-appearing under new forms—must be unmasked under all its disguises.

merely the same old offender calling himself by a different name. PROP. XVIII.

2. Conformably with the method adopted throughout these Institutes, this corrective plan can be carried into effect only by the enunciation of propositions which not only rectify the errors embodied in the corresponding counter-propositions, but also supply the truths which are recommended for acceptance in their stead. Error reiterated under new modes of expression must be met by new verbal reiterations of the truth adapted to these new verbal forms of falsity. Hence the propriety of introducing Props. XVIII., XIX., XX., XXI., which, although they are virtually identical with Props. XIV., XV., XVI., XVII., will be found to differ from them slightly in this respect, that they give a clearer expression both to the errors which are exposed, and to the truths which are advanced; and thus they contribute to the real improvement and final consummation of the science of metaphysics, which is, or ought to be, nothing but a continual working forwards from clearness to a greater and greater degree of insight, exactitude, and illumination in regard to all that concerns the higher interests and ultimate destiny of our nature. Hence the necessity of Props. XVIII., XIX., XX., XXI.

3. *Eighteenth Counter-proposition.*—"There is nothing *but* the relative in cognition: in other words, Eighteenth counter-proposition.

PROP. XVIII.

the relative, and the relative only, is known knowable by man."

It is shown to be contradictory.

4. The test of this counter-proposition is the definition just given of the relative. The relative can be known only along with its correlative: therefore to affirm that the relative *only* can be known, is to affirm that the relative can be known without its correlative being known, which, of course, is a contradictory assertion. What further fallacies lurk under this counter-proposition, and arise out of it, shall be exposed in the subsequent articles.

PROPOSITION XIX.

WHAT THE RELATIVE IN COGNITION IS.

Objects, whatever they may be, are the relative in cognition; matter, in all its varieties, is the relative in cognition; thoughts or mental states whatsoever are the relative in cognition; the universal is the relative in cognition; the particular is the relative in cognition; the ego, or mind, or subject, is the relative in cognition.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE demonstration is a mere reiteration of demonstration XV.; the word "relative" being substituted for the word "phenomenal." Each of the items specified in Prop. XIX. is the relative in cognition, because each of them can be known only along with its correlative. Thus, objects can be known only in relation to some correlative subject—

PROP. XIX.

matter can be known only in relation to some correlative "me." The ego can be known only in relation to some correlative—*i. e.* in relation to the non-ego (some thing or thought). Each of these, therefore, taken *singulatim*, is the relative in cognition.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

Why the items mentioned in the proposition can be known only as the relative.

1. It is obvious that the items here mentioned are the relative in cognition, because each of them can be known or conceived, only when its correlative or counterpart is also known or conceived,—and not because our faculties are incompetent to the apprehension of something absolute; that is, of something known out of relation to everything else. Psychology, however, thinks differently, and hence the following counter-proposition arises. It is a mere repetition, in somewhat different language, of counter-proposition XV.

Nineteenth counter-proposition.

2. *Nineteenth Counter-proposition.*—"The articles specified in the proposition are the relative in cognition, not because each of them can be known only along with its correlative, but because man's faculties are competent to apprehend *only* what is relative, and cannot expand to the comprehension of anything absolute."

PROP. XIX.

Its fallacy shown.

3. But what would happen if we could apprehend *only* the relative? This would happen, that we should be able to apprehend the relative out of relation to the correlative, and the correlative out of relation to the relative. But this supposition is absurd, because it is equivalent to supposing that we can apprehend something *as relative*, without having any cognisance of that which it is *related to*. We can know objects only in relation to ourselves; and we can know ourselves only in relation to objects (some thing or thought); but we cannot know *only* the relative, because this would imply that we could apprehend each factor by itself, and out of relation to the other,—and this we know to be impossible. These considerations may be sufficient to unmask the contradiction involved in this counter-proposition, and to refute the psychological averment that we can know only the relative. The psychological fallacy consists in the supposition that the relative and correlative, taken together or collectively, constitute the mere relative. We shall see immediately that they constitute the Absolute.

PROPOSITION XX.

THE ABSOLUTE IN COGNITION.

There is an Absolute in cognition; in other words, something Absolute is knowable, and is known by us.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE demonstration commences with *the definition of the known absolute*, which is almost coincident with that of known substance. "Whatever can be known (or conceived) *out of relation*, that is to say, without any correlative being necessarily known (or conceived) along with it, is the known Absolute." But some such thing must be known, otherwise all knowledge would be impossible. Because, if everything had a correlative thing which required to be known before *it* could be known; and again, if the thing and its correlative had *another* correlative thing which required to be known before knowledge could arise, and so on perpetually,—it is obvious that no cognition could ever take place; but cogni-

tion does take place. Therefore, something can, and *must* be known, out of relation, or without any correlative being known along with it; and this, whatever it may be, is the known Absolute conformably to the definition. Consequently, there is an Absolute in cognition; in other words, the Absolute is knowable and is known by us. PROP. XX.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. Here, as elsewhere in this section of the science, we are occupied only with the definition and consideration of the *known* Absolute, and not at all with the definition and consideration of the *existing* Absolute. Whatever the existing Absolute may be, it is certain, with all the certainty of necessary truth, as this demonstration proves, that there is a known Absolute, or something which can be embraced in cognition, without any correlative being necessarily embraced in cognition along with it. Nothing is affirmed as to the existing Absolute.

2. The word "absolute" is a term which almost defines itself. By attending to its literal and primitive signification we obtain its exact meaning and force. It signifies the "absolved"—that is, the freed or emancipated in thought from the thought of anything else (*quid absolutum*, τὸ ἀνυποτελές), the self-complete, the detached, or rounded off, the *totum, teres atque rotundum*. Hence, looked at in its mere Comment on definition of the known Absolute.

PROP. XX.

verbal character, it cannot with propriety be defined in any other terms than those which have been laid down as its definition.

Twentieth counter-proposition.

3. *Twentieth Counter-proposition.*—"There is no absolute in cognition. Man's faculties are competent to apprehend only the relative; hence the absolute is unknown, and unknowable by us."

This counter-proposition is a reiteration of counter-proposition XVI.

4. This counter-proposition is merely a repetition, in another form, of Counter-proposition XVI., and it involves precisely the same contradiction. It is subverted by the demonstration of the present proposition, just as Counter-proposition XVI. was overthrown by the demonstration of its corresponding proposition. Such notices of the controversy respecting the absolute and the relative as may be deemed necessary will come in more appropriately under the next article, which is virtually identical with Proposition XVII. No apology, however, seems to be required for its introduction; for, as has been said, new verbal forms of error require to be corrected by new verbal forms of truth, if the hydra-heads of falsehood are to be crushed and the work of speculation done effectually and completely.

PROPOSITION XXI.

WHAT THE ABSOLUTE IN COGNITION IS.

Object *plus* subject is the Absolute in cognition; matter *mecum* is the absolute in cognition; thoughts or mental states whatsoever, *together* with the self or subject, are the absolute in cognition; the universal in union with the particular is the absolute in cognition; the ego or mind in any determinate condition, or with any thought or thing present to it, is the absolute in cognition. This synthesis, thus variously expressed, is the Absolute, and the only Absolute, in cognition.

DEMONSTRATION.

THIS synthesis, thus variously expressed, is the known absolute, because it, and it alone, can be known out of relation, or without any correlative being necessarily known along with it.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

PROP. XXI. Comment on demonstration of Prop. XXI.

1. This demonstration might have been drawn out at greater length. Object + subject was shown in Prop. III. to be the *minimum scibile per se*—that is, the least that can be known *by itself*, or in an isolated state, or out of relation to anything else, (see Prop. III., and in particular Obs. 6); and hence, inasmuch as whatever can be known in an isolated state, or without any correlative, is the known absolute (by Def.), it follows that object + subject is, and must be, the known absolute, and that nothing but this synthesis can be the known absolute, because nothing but this is, or can be, known without any correlative being known along with it. The short demonstration given is, however, quite sufficient for its purpose.

Twenty-first counter-proposition.

2. *Twenty-first Counter-proposition.* — "Object-*plus*-subject, &c.,—this synthesis, thus variously expressed, is not the absolute in cognition; it cannot be known out of relation, or without any correlative being known along with it; because our faculties are not adequate to the comprehension of the absolute, but only to the comprehension of the relative."

3. Much controversy has been expended on the question concerning the Absolute and the Relative, —the one party espousing virtually, although ex-

PROP. XXI.

Fruitlessness of the controversy respecting the Absolute and the Relative. The philosophical temper.

pressing themselves in no very clear or explicit terms, Propositions XX. and XXI.,—the other party advocating the opinions set forth in the corresponding counter-propositions. The one party ranks under the banner of metaphysics,—the other under the standard of psychology. The controversy, however, has been altogether fruitless on both sides. The absolutists have defined nothing, and have proved nothing, and their positions, however true, have been generally unintelligible. The relationists, too, have merely declaimed and asserted, without advancing either definitions or demonstrations, and hence the controversy has terminated—as all such controversies must—in a mere hubbub of words, by which nothing is settled, and from which the student of philosophy can derive neither insight, nor edification, nor that satisfaction of mind which always arises when we *understand* a philosophical doctrine, whether we agree with it or not. This, indeed, is all that metaphysical teaching ought to aim at,—to make people *understand* its positions. To make these positions *convincing* is a point of vastly inferior importance, and one which may very well be left to take its chance. Our psychologists, however, rather labour at the establishment of some hazy sort of belief in their own dogmas, than at the diffusion of universal light on all the grounds, and processes, and movements, and results of sheer speculative contemplation. It appears to the writer of these remarks,

PROP. XXI.

that no advantage to the intellect of man, but, on the contrary, very great detriment, must ensue from following such a sectarian course. What philosophy is called upon to exhibit is not what any individual may choose or wish to think, but what thinking itself thinks, whenever it is permitted to go forth free, unimpeded, and uninterfered with, guided by no law except the determination to go whithersoever its own current may carry it, and *to see the end*,—turning up, with unswerving ploughshare, whatever it may encounter in its onward course, trying all things by the test of a remorseless logic, and scanning with indifference the havoc it may work among the edifices of established opinion, or the treasures it may bring to light among the solitary haunts of disregarded truth. If this catholic temper cannot be reached, it may, at any rate, be approximated; and therefore, to furnish insight much rather than to produce conviction, is the object which these Institutes have in view, the assurance being felt that where insight is obtained, conviction will in all likelihood follow; and that conviction not founded on insight is worse than unprofitable; whereas philosophical insight, even when not succeeded by philosophical belief, can never fail to expand and clarify the faculties, both moral and intellectual.

4. As has been said, the want of an exact definition of the Absolute has rendered all the contro-

PROP. XXI.

versies on this topic resultless and unmeaning,—and has prevented any intelligible doctrine of the Absolute from obtaining a footing in philosophy, notwithstanding the exertions which have been put forth in its support by the metaphysicians of Germany. Another circumstance by which the confusion has been considerably aggravated is this, that neither party has distinctly stated whether the Absolute, about which they were fighting, was attainable as a product of common knowledge, or as an elaboration of scientific reflection: in other words, whether it was the possession of all men, or the property of the few who were philosophers. The opponents of the doctrine have usually supposed that the subject in dispute was of the latter character, and accordingly they have taunted their adversaries with laying claim to a knowledge which was not shared in by the community at large, and which, at any rate, could be realised only through a long meditative probation, and by dint of strenuous speculative efforts; and their adversaries have been at no pains to undeceive them. Hence the altercation has run into a very complicated form of confusion, from neither party knowing, or at least explaining, whether absolute cognition was the result of ordinary or of scientific thinking.

The causes of confusion in this controversy.

5. The truth is, that all men are equally cognisant of the absolute. Those who disavow this knowledge

PROP. XXI.

All men are equally cognisant of the absolute.

do, and must, entertain it, just as much as those who lay claim to it. No effort is required to get hold of it. Every man who is cognisant of himself, together with the things which come before him, has a knowledge of the absolute; because he apprehends this synthesis as detached and rounded off, and not in necessary association with anything else. It is true that our cognitions are linked together by such inveterate ties of association that it may be difficult, in point of fact, to obtain an absolutely isolated apprehension of oneself and any particular thing. But this is a question which is to be determined by reason, and not by experience. The laws of association are arbitrary and contingent, and their operation must at present be discounted. The question is, What is *all* that is strictly necessary to constitute a case of absolute and isolated cognition? and the answer is, "Me *plus* a grain of sand or less," even although, in point of fact, I should not be able to apprehend a grain of sand without taking cognisance, at the same time, of a whole sea-shore. The accidental enlargement of the objective element has no effect in essentially augmenting the absolute in cognition.—(See Prop. III. Obs. 8).

A reminder.

6. The reader need scarcely be reminded, that no grain of sand *by itself*, no, nor a universe of grains of sand by themselves, will constitute the absolute in cognition. Pile Pelion on Ossa, and the result will

be mere relative knowledge, when these are considered in relation to their complementary factor, the ego; out of this relation they are the purely contradictory. Neither will the ego, *by itself*—that is, with no thought or thing present to it—constitute the absolute in cognition; because it can be known only along with its correlative factor, some thought or some thing. But the synthesis of the two factors *must* constitute the absolute in cognition; because this can be known out of all relation, or absolved and emancipated from every correlative. PROP. XXI.

7. It is thus obvious that there is a known absolute; that it is the spontaneous growth of ordinary thinking, and not the product of philosophical excogitation; that it is the inalienable possession of all intelligent beings, and not the peculiar property of a few speculative theorists. Had this been made clear at the outset, the controversy on this topic might have been relieved from one great source of embarrassment and confusion. Confusion might have been obviated had it been shown that all men are equally cognisant of the absolute.

8. No effort, then, is required to compass the known absolute; but some effort is required to know that we are compassing it. This is a case in which the student of philosophy is not called upon to do something, but simply to know that he is already doing it. In our ordinary moods, we always mistake the relative for the absolute, and suppose, for ex- The difficulty is, not to know it, but to know that we know it.

PROP. XXI.

ample, that the trees which we are looking at are known absolutely, or out of relation to ourselves. Then, again, when misled by psychology, we are extremely apt to mistake the absolute for the relative, and to suppose that the trees and ourselves *together* are known merely relatively. After the numerous explanations, however, which have been given, it is conceived that the reader should now have no difficulty in understanding that what he apprehends is always the synthesis of himself and things (object-*plus*-subject), and that this is the absolute in his cognition, because he knows it without necessarily knowing anything else at the same time.

Refutation of the relationist doctrine.

9. The causes which have misled the upholders of a merely relative cognition are not difficult to assign. They saw that material, or other, objects could be known only in relation to the ego; and also that the ego could be known only in relation to some thing or thought; and hence they concluded that our knowledge both of ourselves and things was wholly relative. And so it is, when looked at in that way. Each term can be known only in relation to the other term. But why cannot both of the terms be looked at *together*. Why can the completed relation not be taken into account? The relationists have neglected that consideration. In point of fact, the two terms are always looked at and apprehended together. And it is a sufficient refuta-

tion of the relationist doctrine to ask—what is this total synthesis known in relation to? If our knowledge of it is a relative knowledge, we must know it in relation to something. What is that something—what is the correlative of this completed synthesis? Psychology can give no answer—can point out no correlative. Hence this synthesis is the known Absolute. It stands disengaged or absolved in thought from all connection with anything else. When psychology can point out the correlative factor of this entire and isolated synthesis, she may then maintain with some show of reason that our knowledge is wholly relative; but until she can do this, she must vail her flag before the standard of the absolutist. PROP. XXI.

10. Kant was of opinion that he had hit upon a notable refutation of the doctrine of the Absolute when he declared, that "whatever we know must be known in conformity to the constitution of our faculties of cognition." Of course, it must. And must not everything which *any* intelligence knows be known on the same terms—be known in conformity to the constitution of *its* cognitive faculties? and must not every intelligence know *itself* along with all that it knows? and hence must not every intelligence, when it apprehends this synthesis (whatever the character of the particular element may be), apprehend that which is absolute, inasmuch as Kant on the Absolute.

PROP. XXI.

it must apprehend that which has no necessary correlative? Kant seems to have thought that although *we* could not know material things absolutely or out of relation to our faculties, other intelligences might possess this capacity, and might be competent to know them absolutely, or as they existed out of relation to *their* cognitive endowments—a supposition which carries a contradiction on the very face of it. If "the Absolute" can be known only when it is known out of relation to the faculties of *all* intelligence, it is obvious that there can be no cognisance of it in any quarter—not even on the part of Omniscience. Kant's refusal to generalise, or lay down as applicable to *all* intelligence, the law that *our* intellect can know things only as it is competent to know them, is one of the strangest cases of obstinacy to be found in the history of speculative opinion. Can any intellect, actual or possible, know things except as it is able to know them?

The relation of non-contradictories and the relation of contradictories.

11. The relations of which we usually speak, and which come before us in physical science, and in ordinary life, are relations between non-contradictories. Thus, for example, the relation which subsists between an acid and an alkali, between a father and a son, between the earth and the moon, are relations of non-contradictories, because each of these things is conceivable *out of* as well as *in* relation to the other. But the relationship of subject and

object—of *me* and things, or thoughts, is a relationship of contradictories, because each term can be conceived only *in* relation to the other. A thing or thought with no "me" known or thought of in connection with it, is an expression of nonsense, and "me," with no thing or thought present to me, is equally an expression of nonsense. The known Absolute is thus a synthesis of two contradictories, and not of two non-contradictories. This should be particularly borne in mind. Psychology never gets beyond the position that the synthesis of subject *plus* object is the union of two non-contradictories, and thus sticks at the *pons asinorum* of speculation which demands, as the condition of all further progress and enlightenment, an insight into the truth that the fusion of two contradictories — that is, of two elements which are necessarily unknowable *singulatim*—is the genesis of absolute cognition.

PROPOSITION XXII.

THE CONTINGENT CONDITIONS OF KNOWLEDGE.

The senses are the contingent conditions of knowledge; in other words, it is possible that intelligences different from the human (supposing that there are such) should apprehend things under other laws, or in other ways, than those of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling; or, more shortly, *our* senses are not laws of cognition, or modes of apprehension, which are binding on intelligence necessarily and universally.

DEMONSTRATION.

A CONTINGENT law of knowledge must, first of all, be defined. "A contingent law of knowledge is one which, although complied with in certain cases in the attainment of knowledge, is not enforced by reason as a condition which *must* be complied with wherever knowledge is to take place." Knowledge

PROP. XXII.

is thus possible under other conditions than the contingent laws to which certain intelligences may be subject: in other words, there is no contradiction in affirming that an intelligent being may have knowledge of some kind or other without having such senses as we have. This being understood, the demonstration is as follows: Whatever conditions of knowledge may be conceived (without a contradiction) to be changed, leaving knowledge still possible, these, according to the definition, are contingent laws. But our five senses may be conceived (without a contradiction) to be changed, leaving knowledge (knowledge, of course, of a different character from that which we now possess) still possible. Therefore our senses are contingent conditions of cognition; they are not binding on intelligence necessarily and universally.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. This proposition takes us into a region quite different from that in which we have been hitherto expatiating. It takes us into the region of contingent truth—of truth, in regard to cognition, which might conceivably have been other than it is. Till now we have been dealing with necessary truth—of truth absolutely unalterable—of law binding universally. The twenty-one preceding propositions give expression to the necessary truths of reason,—

This proposition takes us out of necessary into contingent truth.

PROP. XXII.

the universal and unchangeable laws of knowledge, —the conditions without a compliance with which all cognition and all intelligence are impossible. They lay down the laws not simply of *our* knowing and of *our* thinking, but of *all* knowing and of *all* thinking.

It is introduced in order that the necessary may be separated from the contingent laws.

2. In contrast to these laws, this proposition places before us the main contingent conditions of cognition—those to which *we* specially are subject—without declaring whether other intelligences may, as a matter of contingency, be subject to the same conditions or not. All that is affirmed is, that they are not *necessarily* bound by these laws, because *we* are not necessarily bound by them. The contingent laws are brought forward, in order that their separation from the necessary laws may be effected; for it is of the utmost importance that the two series should be clearly discriminated from each other. Accordingly, they are placed in the smelting-house of speculation, not on their own account, but in order to disengage them from the necessary laws with which they are invariably mixed up in our experience,—just as the founder places the ironstone in his furnace, not on account of the stone, but on account of the iron with which it is combined.

3. This analysis is indispensable, because the conclusion towards which the inquiry is advancing in

the ontology, is the reasoned settlement of *what absolutely exists*. Now, two preliminary objections may be raised as a bar to any such attempt: first, it may be said that we are not entitled to predicate the absolute existence even of that which is known to us under the necessary laws; and, secondly, that we are still less entitled to predicate the absolute existence of that which is known to us under the contingent laws. The force of the former objection shall be considered more particularly hereafter. The force of the latter objection is at once conceded. Speculation, it is to be hoped, knows her business better than to ascribe an absolute Being either to the contingent laws of knowledge, or to anything which is known to us through their instrumentality. But in order to exhibit that for which a real and absolute existence is hereafter to be claimed, it is necessary that this should be disengaged from that for which no such existence is claimed; and in order to effect this disengagement, it is indispensable that the contingent laws of knowledge, and that which is known in virtue of them, should be distinguished from the necessary laws, and from that which is known by means of their operation.

PROP. XXII.

Why this analysis is indispensable.

4. In setting about this analysis, the reader is requested to observe that it is not one which he is required actually to perform, but only to understand the *possibility* of. No man, when he apprehends or

What is required in setting about this analysis.

PROP. XXII.

thinks of the synthesis which subsists between himself and external things, can, in point *of fact*, leave his senses out of the estimate, or conceive them altogether changed; but he can surely understand that they might possibly be altered; in other words, that the synthesis of himself and things might possibly embrace other modes of apprehension than his five senses. *How* this should be, or *what* these other modes of apprehension might be, he cannot of course conceive; nor is he now called upon to conceive it. All that he is required to understand is the possibility *that* such a change should take place without rendering the attainment of knowledge altogether inconceivable, and, at the same time, to mark the impossibility of there being any knowledge in any quarter if the element called *self* and the law called self-consciousness were supposed to be discounted from the process, or exchanged for any other law.

The analysis illustrated.

5. This, then, being premised, the reader may obtain a distinct conception of the analysis by which the contingent are distinguished from the necessary laws of cognition, by attending to the following illustration: Let him suppose himself to be looking at something—a tree, for example: he will find that the true and total object of his mind, in this case, is himself-seeing-the-tree. But he might possibly have a cognisance of the tree, though his seeing of it were exchanged for some other sense. He might apprehend it by the

way of touch. Therefore seeing is not absolutely essential to all cognition of the tree. Again, he might possibly have a cognisance of the tree though his touch were exchanged for some other sense. He might hear the rustling of its leaves. Therefore the sense of touch is not absolutely essential to all cognition of the tree. Again, he might still have some cognisance of it though his hearing were exchanged for some other sense. He might smell the fragrance of its blossoms. Therefore hearing is not absolutely essential to all cognition of the tree. Again, he might still have some cognisance of it though his sense of smell were exchanged for some other mode of apprehension. He might apprehend it through the sense of taste. Therefore the sense of smell is not absolutely essential to all cognition of the tree. In short, one and all of our present senses might be abolished, and, provided they were replaced by a set of different senses, our knowledge of the tree might be as perfect or more perfect than it now is. The senses therefore are conditions of cognition wholly contingent, and subject to possible variation; and hence, also, all that is made known to us through their means is wholly contingent, and subject to possible variation.

6. Let these be now placed in contrast with the necessary condition of all knowledge to which expression was given in the first proposition of this

The analysis illustrated.

PROP. XXII.

system. Let the man, as before, suppose himself to be gazing on the tree. That which he is cognisant of is, as before, himself-seeing-the-tree. Let us now suppose the self which he is cognisant of to be exchanged for something else, and that some mode of apprehension different from self-consciousness comes into play—would the man, in that case, continue to have any cognisance of the tree? Certainly he would not. No cognition of the tree, or of anything else, would now be possible. Withhold any of a man's senses from his cognisance when he is conversant with external things, and he will still be able to apprehend them, provided you give him other modes of apprehension. But withhold a man's self from his cognisance when he is conversant with external things, and he shall not be able to apprehend them intelligently,—give him what substitute and what endowments you please in place of the self which has been withdrawn from his cognition. It is thus obvious that, while it is possible for intelligence to know things without knowing them by means of such senses as ours, inasmuch as it may know them in other ways of which we can form no conception, it is impossible for any intelligence to know them without being cognisant of itself at the same time. Hence self-consciousness is fixed as the necessary condition of *all* knowing—while the senses are fixed merely as the contingent conditions of some, *i. e.* of *our*, knowing.

PROP. XXII.

7. This analysis might be carried out at much greater length by contrasting the present with the twenty-one preceding propositions; and by showing that while each of the latter expresses a law binding upon *all* intelligence, the former expresses merely certain laws which are binding upon *our* intelligence. But it is conceived that the reader's own penetration may enable him to make this comparison for himself, and to perceive that, without a compliance with the laws laid down in the previous propositions, no knowledge of any kind is possible: whereas, without a compliance with the conditions laid down in the present proposition, knowledge might very well take place, although it would be of a different character from that which we now possess. Knowledge might take place notwithstanding this non-compliance, because no contradiction is involved in the supposition that there should be an intelligent apprehension of things under other conditions than our five senses; but a contradiction is involved in the supposition that any kind of cognition should arise under a reversal of the laws specified in the twenty-one preceding propositions—all of which, as was remarked at the outset, are derivations from the primary law set forth in Proposition I.

It is unnecessary to carry the analysis into greater detail.

8. The foregoing considerations tend to qualify, in certain respects, the doctrine of the known absolute which was broached in Proposition XXI. The

PROP. XXII.

How these remarks qualify the doctrine of the absolute given in Prop. XXI.

absolute in *our* cognition is ourselves apprehending things by one or more of our five senses. But only one of the factors of this synthesis is definite and invariable — to wit, self: the other factors must be *some* thing or *some* thought, and *some* way of knowing it. But inasmuch as the particular constituents of cognition are variable and inexhaustible, as was explained in Prop. VI. Obs. 2, it is, of course, impossible for any system to declare *what* particular things, or *what* particular thoughts, or *what* particular modes of apprehension shall, in all cases, enter into the synthesis of cognition. Hence all that we are entitled to predicate in regard to the absolute in *all* cognition is, that it is a synthesis consisting of a self (this alone is definite and nameable) and objects, or thoughts, and modes of apprehension of some kind or other (these being indefinite and unnameable). In other words, we are not entitled to give out as the absolute in *all* cognition a subject *plus* the particular things that *we* are cognisant of, and *plus* the particular senses which *we* have been endowed with—but only a subject *plus* some thing or thought, and *plus* some mode or modes of apprehension.

The absolute, however, is still object + subject. The main result of the epistemology

9. By these explanations, however, the constitution of the synthesis of all cognition is in no respect *essentially* altered. It still remains what it has been declared throughout this work to be—subject + ob-

ject, the word *object* being used in the most general sense in which it can be employed to signify any thing, or thought, or state of mind whatsoever, of which any intelligence may be cognisant. And the conclusion which the epistemology gives out as its main result is, that this synthesis, or, as it may be also termed, the known absolute, is the only possible object which any intelligence can ever apprehend. Pursue the object of knowledge or of thought through all the metamorphoses which it may be conceived to undergo, and it will never turn up as anything but this—the unity of subject and object. Try to fix it as anything but this, and the attempt will invariably terminate in a contradiction. PROP. XXII.

10. *Twenty-second Counter-proposition.* — "The senses are not more contingent than any of the other conditions of human knowledge. On the contrary, they are more indispensable to the attainment of knowledge than any of the other means with which human intelligence is provided, or than any of the other laws to which human intelligence is subject." Twenty-second counter-proposition.

11. This counter-proposition expresses the loose opinion of ordinary thinking in regard to the superior claims of the senses to rank as necessary principles of cognition—an inadvertency which psychology has done little or nothing to correct. The chief circumstance to be attended to in connection The chief point to be attended to in it.

PROP. XXII.

with it is, that it records with approval an omission which has been exceedingly prejudicial to the interests of philosophy—the omission, namely, to signalise the distinction between the necessary and the contingent laws of cognition.

The cause of the errors of representationism pointed out.

12. Much of the perplexity and inconclusiveness of speculative thinking is to be attributed to the want of this analysis. To this cause the errors of representationism * and the insufficiency of Berkleianism are mainly to be assigned. It was formerly remarked (Prop. XI. Obs. 10) that the doctrine of a representative perception is an obscure anticipation of the great law of all reason, which declares that nothing objective can be apprehended unless something subjective be apprehended as well. So far this system is true, and moves in a right direction. But the question is, *What* is the subjective part which *must* be apprehended whenever any objective counterpart is apprehended? Here it is that representationism goes astray. One part of the subjective contribution (the ego) enters *necessarily* into the constitution of cognition (a man must know himself along with

* In case any of our readers should be in doubt as to what is exactly meant by "representationism," it may be remarked, that this is the doctrine which holds that we are cognisant of external objects only in or through some subjective medium, called indifferently by the name of *ideas*, *images*, or *species*,—in other words, that we are cognisant of things only in, or along with, our own *perceptions* of them; an undeniable truth, in spite of the exertions which Dr Reid made to overthrow it. (See Prop. XI. Obs. 9.)

all that he knows); another part of the subjective contribution (the senses) enters only *contingently* into the constitution of cognition (a man *might possibly* know things in other ways than those of seeing, touching, &c.) But the advocates of representationism, from being blind to this distinction, got entangled in a web of perplexity from which there was no extrication. They omitted to make out the analysis, and consequently they must be held either to have elevated the senses, considered as elements of cognition, to the same footing of necessity with the ego, or else to have reduced the ego, considered as an element of cognition, to the same footing of contingency with the senses. Whichever of these alternatives they may have adopted, the consequences were equally erroneous. If we suppose representationism to adopt the first alternative, and to hold that the senses are *necessary* to cognition—in other words, that no knowledge is possible except to an intelligence who is cognisant of such senses as we possess—in that case the material universe would be reduced to the predicament of a contradiction, if our senses were withdrawn. It would become absolutely unknowable; because, upon this supposition, such senses as ours must necessarily be known along with it. And the only mode in which we could conceive it to subsist as a non-contradictory thing in our absence, would be by thinking it in synthesis with some mind which apprehended it exactly as we

PROP. XXII.

apprehend it—namely, by the way of seeing, hearing, touching, &c. But this is a species of anthropomorphical ontology which revolts us, and which we are by no means prepared to accept; and we refuse to accept it, because the conclusion is not logically reached. Reason does not assure us that all knowledge is impossible except under such sensational conditions as we are subject to.

The same subject continued.

13. Again, if we suppose representationism to adopt the second of these alternatives, and to hold that the ego is not a necessary, but is, like the senses, a mere contingent element of cognition—in other words, that knowledge is possible to an intelligence who is not cognisant of himself; in that case, the material universe would not be reduced to the predicament of a contradiction by the removal therefrom of every intelligent subject. It would still remain a knowable and intelligible thing, because upon this supposition no ego must necessarily be known or thought of along with it. But this is a species of materialistic ontology which revolts us as much as the other, and is fully more illogical. It assigns to matter an absolute and independent existence; and that step once taken, the descent into atheism is as inevitable (let people struggle against it as they please) as the gravitation of a stone towards the valley, when it has once been loosened from the overhanging mountain-top. But the ontology

which assigns to matter *per se* an intelligible or non-contradictory existence, is founded on an abnegation of all the necessary principles of reason; and therefore the doctrine of a representative perception, if we suppose it to embrace the alternative now under consideration, or to hold that the subject is only contingently known along with the objects which it apprehends, is obnoxious to the justest censure. PROP. XXII.

14. The system of Bishop Berkeley, also, was vitiated by the absence of this analysis, or by the neglect to distinguish the necessary from the contingent conditions of cognition. He falls into the error consequent on the adoption of the first of the alternatives just referred to. He saw that something subjective was a necessary and inseparable part of every object of cognition. But instead of maintaining that it was the ego or oneself which clove inseparably to all that could be known, and that this element must be thought of along with all that is thought of, he rather held that it was the senses, or our perceptive modes of cognition, which clove inseparably to all that could be known, and that these required to be thought of along with all that could be thought of. These, just as much as the ego, were held by him to be the subjective part of the total synthesis of cognition which could not by any possibility be discounted. Hence the unsatisfactory character of his ontology, which, The cause of Berkeley's errors pointed out.

PROP. XXII.

when tried by the test of a rigorous logic, will be found to invest the Deity—the supreme mind, the infinite ego, which the terms of his system necessarily compel him to place in synthesis with all things —with human modes of apprehension, with such senses as belong to man—and to invest Him with these, not as a matter of contingency, but as a matter of necessity. Our only safety lies in the consideration—a consideration which is a sound, indeed inevitable logical inference—that our sensitive modes of apprehension are mere contingent elements and conditions of cognition; and that the ego or subject alone enters, of necessity, into the composition of everything which any intelligence can know. The weak points in Berkeley's system are these three: first, he missed, though only by a hairsbreadth, the reduction of matter *per se* to a contradiction—an achievement which, until it be effected, speculation can accomplish nothing; secondly, in consequence of his neglect to distinguish the necessary from the contingent laws of knowledge, he failed to show that the supreme mind which the compulsory reason forced him to place in union with the universe, was not necessarily subject to our sensible modes of apprehension; and thirdly, he was hampered at every turn, as all philosophers have hitherto been, by the want of an agnoiology, or systematic doctrine of ignorance. In other respects, and viewed as approximations to the truth, the spe-

culations of this philosopher, whether we consider the beauty and clearness of his style, or the depth of his insight, have done better service to the cause of metaphysical science than the lucubrations of all other modern thinkers put together. PROP. XXII.

15. The main result of the epistemology has been already touched upon under this proposition in Observation 9. But a more expanded statement of this result will form no inappropriate termination to the first section of these Institutes. The main result of the epistemology is this: In answer to the question, *What is knowledge or Knowing?* it replies that all Knowing is the apprehension of oneself along with all that one apprehends. This cognisance of self in addition to whatever things, or thoughts, we may be cognisant of—this, and this alone, is knowledge. In answer to the question, *What is known?* it replies that object + subject,—things or thoughts *mecum*—constitute the only object which it is possible for any intelligence to know: further, that this synthesis constitutes the only object which it is possible for any intelligence to conceive or think of; because there can be a conception only of that of which the type or pattern may possibly be given in cognition: further, that the only way in which it is possible for any individual intelligence to transcend his own consciousness of himself and things, is by conceiving the total synthesis of which he himself is conscious

The main result of the epistemology.

PROP. XXII.

repeated or multiplied, either with or without certain variations; in other words, by conceiving other intelligences conscious of themselves in the same way in which he is conscious of himself, and cognisant of things either as he is cognisant of them, or in ways of which he is totally ignorant: no consciousness can transcend itself in any other way than this, without falling sheer over into the abyss of the contradictory: but the mode of transcendence which these Institutes contend for, as the only possible mode, is quite easy and legitimate, and is as satisfactory as any that could be desired; indeed much more satisfactory, both in itself and in its conclusions, than the contradictory transcendence of consciousness (the transcendence, namely, by which it is supposed to pass out of and beyond itself, and to lay hold of material things in a state of absolute secernment from itself) for which psychology usually contends: further, in answer to the question, *What is absolutely unknown and unknowable?* it replies that everything without a "me" known along with it, and that every "me" without a thing or thought known along with it, is absolutely unknown and unknowable; in other words, that the two factors (universal and particular) which are required to constitute *every* cognition present nothing but contradictions to the mind when taken *singulatim*, or apart from one another.

PROP. XXII.

The importance of this result.

16. In each of the foregoing propositions either a contradictory inadvertency of ordinary thinking, or an erroneous deliverance of psychology—to which expression is given in the counter-propositions—is corrected and removed, while a necessary truth of reason is, in each case, substituted in their room. So far, at least, the system has fulfilled the pledge held out in the Introduction, § 47. And, on the whole, it is submitted that the result of this reasoned theory of knowledge, though sufficiently simple, is neither insignificant nor unsatisfactory. It can scarcely be regarded as unimportant, unless the conversion of the soul of man from darkness to light—from a blindness to an insight in regard to the true object of his knowledge—from contradictory to intelligible thinking—from apparent to real cognition—be held to be a trivial and undesirable transmutation. In the next section the ship of speculation is put upon a new tack. The great waters of Reason spread before her in a direction heretofore untraversed; and launching forth under a new impulsion,

"Ingens iterabimus æquor."

SECTION II.

THE AGNOIOLOGY, OR THEORY OF IGNORANCE.

PROPOSITION I.

WHAT IGNORANCE IS.

Ignorance is an intellectual defect, imperfection, privation, or shortcoming.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE deprivation of anything whose possession is consistent with the nature of the Being which wants it, is a defect. But ignorance is a deprivation of something which is consistent with the nature of intelligence: it is a deprivation of knowledge. Therefore ignorance is an intellectual defect, imperfection, privation, or shortcoming.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. The demonstration, and even the enunciation, of so obvious a truism may appear superfluous. It is introduced, however, in order that the doctrine of ignorance may be cleared from the very beginning,

Why this proposition is introduced.

PROP. I.

and to obviate any complaint to which the subsequent propositions might be exposed on the ground that their data of proof had been left doubtful or unexpressed.

Novelty of the agnoiology.

2. There have been many inquiries into the nature of knowledge: there has been no inquiry into the nature of ignorance. This section of the science has positively no forerunner; it is an entire novelty in philosophy—a circumstance which is mentioned merely to account for the fewness and brevity of the accompanying annotations. The agnoiology makes its way through a comparatively unencumbered field. There is something to pull down and something to build up; but the work both of demolition and of construction is much simpler than it was in the epistemology.

The agnoiology is indispensable.

3. This research, however, is indispensable. It is impossible to pass to the third section of the science except through the portals of this inquiry. For, suppose we were at once to carry forward the result of the epistemology into the ontology, and in answer to the question, What truly and absolutely is? were to reply, Objects *plus* a subject, the ego with some thing or thought present to it—this, and this alone, is what truly and absolutely is,—we should be instantly stopped by the rejoinder that this synthesis is, at best, merely the *known* absolute, merely the

substantial *in cognition*. It does not follow, the objector would say, that this synthesis alone is true and absolute Being—that it is the only true substantial *in existence*. He would argue that what truly and absolutely exists may be something very different from this—may be matter *per se* or mind *per se*, or something else of which we can form no sort of conception, and to which we can attach no predicate;—in short that it may be, and is, that of which we are profoundly ignorant.

The plea of our ignorance a bar to ontology.

4. This plea has hitherto operated as an insurmountable barrier to the advance of metaphysics into the region of ontology. The fact of our extreme ignorance being undeniable, and the science of absolute existence being apparently inaccessible except on the postulation of a universal and unlimited knowledge, the difficulty of reconciling these two apparent incompatibilities seems to have disconcerted every system hitherto propounded. This department of the science must appear obviously impossible and illegitimate to a system which admits our ignorance without entering into any critical inquiry as to its nature; while, on the other hand, the ontology of a system which denies our ignorance, or passes it over *sub silentio*, must either rest upon a false ground, or upon no ground at all—on a false ground if our ignorance is denied—on no ground at all if it is not taken into account. In one or other

PROP. I.

of these predicaments all previous systems appear to be placed in reference to the problem of absolute existence; and hence a reasoned and systematic ontology has remained until this day a desideratum in speculative science, because a reasoned and systematic agnoiology has never yet been projected.

This obstacle can be removed only by an inquiry into the nature of ignorance.

5. The only way in which a deliverance from this dilemma can be effected is, by admitting our ignorance to the full, and then by instituting a searching inquiry into its nature and character. Conceding, then, that the conclusion of the epistemology cannot at present, with any logical propriety, be given out as valid for the ontology, the system proceeds to this investigation, and dealing not with the abstract, but only, or chiefly, with the concrete, it goes on to consider and to point out *what* we are, and can be, and *what* we are not, and cannot be, ignorant of. It is conceived that the research, thus conducted, will result in an effectual clearance of the ground for the establishment of a demonstrated ontology.

First counter-proposition.

6. *First Counter-proposition.*—There is *no* first counter-proposition. We shall come, indeed, by and by, to certain psychological doctrines which are defensible only on the ground that ignorance is no imperfection, and therefore a counter-proposition expressing this denial might, perhaps, have been introduced. But, inasmuch as this proposition has

never been distinctly denied either by psychology or by ordinary thinking, no counter-proposition is placed in opposition to it. Its place, however, is marked, in order that the counter-propositions to which we are coming may be numbered, for convenience' sake, in accordance with their corresponding propositions. PROP. I.

PROPOSITION II.

IGNORANCE REMEDIABLE.

All ignorance is *possibly* remediable.

DEMONSTRATION.

No kind of knowledge is absolutely inconsistent with the nature of all intelligence. But unless all ignorance were *possibly* remediable, some kind of knowledge would be inconsistent with the nature of all intelligence, to wit the knowledge by which the ignorance in question might be remedied. Therefore all ignorance is *possibly* remediable.

Or again, All defects are possibly remediable, otherwise they would not be defects. But ignorance is a defect (Prop. I.) Therefore all ignorance is possibly remediable.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

All that this proposition proves.

1. This proposition does not prove that all ignorance is *actually* remedied: in other words, that omniscience pervades the universe; but only that

every form of ignorance is of such a character that it may *possibly* be removed; and that if certain kinds of ignorance are incident to certain orders of the intelligence, they are not, *of necessity*, incident to other orders of intelligence. The subsequent movements of the system do not require that more than this should be proved. Neither does this proposition prove that all *human* ignorance is possibly remediable. It only proves that what man, or any other intelligence, may happen to be ignorant of, need not, of necessity, be unknown to all other intelligences (supposing that other intelligences exist). In other words, it merely proves that whatever any intelligence is ignorant of, may nevertheless be known—known *actually* if an intelligence exists competent to know it,—and known *potentially* even although no such intelligence should exist. Unless this were true, all ignorance would not be possibly remediable; and if all ignorance were not possibly remediable, some kind of knowledge would be inconsistent with the nature of all intelligence—in which case ignorance would be no defect, because a defect is always the privation of some quality or attribute which is consistent with the nature of the being who is deprived of it. PROP. II.

2. *Second Counter-proposition.*—In this case, too, the counter-proposition is wanting; but its place is thus marked for the reason already assigned. Second counter-proposition.

PROPOSITION III.

WHAT THERE CAN BE IGNORANCE OF.

We can be ignorant only of what can possibly be known; in other words, there can be an ignorance only of that of which there can be a knowledge.

DEMONSTRATION.

If we could be ignorant of what could not possibly be known by any intelligence, all ignorance would not be possibly remediable. The knowledge in which we were deficient could not be possessed by any intelligence. But all ignorance is possibly remediable (by Prop. II.) Therefore, we can be ignorant only of what can possibly be known; in other words, there can be an ignorance only of that of which there can be a knowledge.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. This is the most important proposition in the agnoiology: indeed, with the exception of the first of

PROP. III.

the epistemology, it is the most fruitful and penetrating proposition in the whole system. It announces —for the first time it is believed—the primary law of all ignorance, just as the first of the epistemology expresses the primary law of all knowledge. It is mainly by the aid of these two propositions that this system of Institutes is worked out. All the other propositions have an essential part to play in contributing to the final result; but these two are the most efficient performers in the work. If the reader has got well in hand these two truths—*first*, that there can be a knowledge of things only with the addition of a self or subject; and, *secondly*, that there can be an ignorance only of that of which there can be a knowledge—he will find himself in possession of a lever powerful enough to break open the innermost secrecies of nature. These two instruments cut deep and far—they lay open the universe from stem to stern.

Importance of this proposition.

2. The law of all ignorance may be illustrated by the same symbols which were used in Proposition IV. of the epistemology, Obs. 11, to illustrate the law of all knowledge. Just as there can be a knowledge of X only when there is a knowledge of Y, so there can be an ignorance of X only when there is an ignorance of Y. Because if there could be an ignorance of X without Y, but not a knowledge of X without Y, something would be ignored which

Symbols illustrative of the law of ignorance.

PROP. III.

could not be known—a supposition which is contradictory and absurd."

Distinction between ignorance and a nescience of the opposites of necessary truth.

3. Ignorance, properly so called—that is, the ignorance which is a defect—must not be confounded with a nescience of the opposites of the necessary truths of reason; in other words, with a nescience of that which it would contradict the nature of all intelligence to know. Such nescience is no defect or imperfection—it is, on the contrary, the very strength or perfection of reason; and therefore such nescience is not to be regarded as ignorance. This simple but very important distinction must be explained and illustrated, for it is one which is very apt to be lost sight of, or confounded; indeed, it has been altogether overlooked until now.

There can be no ignorance of the opposites of the geometrical axioms.

4. When boys at school are taught Euclid, they learn that "the enclosure of space by two straight lines" is what cannot be known,—that "if equals be added to equals the wholes are *un*equal" is what cannot be known,—that "a part is greater than the whole" is what cannot be known, and so forth; but they do not learn that they are equally incapable of being ignorant of such matters. It is not necessary to apprise them of this in order to carry them forward in the study of mathematics. Nothing in geometry depends on the circumstance that we cannot be ignorant of what is deponed to in the opposites of the

axioms. Hence this study merely shows us that there can be no knowledge of these opposites; it does not open our eyes to the fact that there can be no ignorance of them. It is obvious, however, that it is just as impossible for us to be ignorant of them as it is impossible for us to know them. No man can know that two and two make five,—but just as little can any man be ignorant of this; for suppose him ignorant of it,—in that case his ignorance could be removed only by teaching him that two and two *do* make five; but such instruction, instead of removing his ignorance, would remove his knowledge, and instead of giving him knowledge, would give him ignorance, or rather absurdity. The cure in this case would be itself the disease.

PROP. III.

5. An attention to the fact, that it is impossible for us (or for any intelligence) to be ignorant of the contradictory, that is, of the opposites of the necessary truths of reason, or, in other words, of that which cannot be known on any terms by any intelligence, though of no importance in mathematics, is of the utmost importance in metaphysics. Speculation can obtain a footing in ontology only by attending carefully to this circumstance, and by working it out through all its consequences. This truth is the key to the whole philosophy of ignorance. When we consider it well, we discover that the supposition that we can be ignorant of that which is absolutely and

There can be no ignorance of the contradictory.

PROP. III.

necessarily unknowable to all intelligence, is as extreme a violation of the law of contradiction as it is possible to conceive. We perceive that a nescience of the contradictory is not ignorance, but is the very essence of intelligence; and that there can be an ignorance only of that which can be known, or otherwise expressed, of that which is non-contradictory. With this discovery, light breaks into every cranny and recess of our science: the "holy jungle" of metaphysic is laid open to the searching day, and now no obstacle can stop the onward course of speculation.

Third counter-proposition.

6. It may be doubtful whether, and how far, this proposition has ever been denied. But as it is not improbable that an obscure impression popularly prevails that we are most ignorant of that which cannot be known, the following counter-proposition is appended. *Third Counter-proposition:* "We can be ignorant of what cannot possibly be known—indeed, that of which there can be no knowledge, is precisely that of which there must be the profoundest ignorance." If any such doctrine as this is, or ever was, entertained, it is conceived that it cannot hold its ground before the present proposition and its demonstration.

PROPOSITION IV.

IGNORANCE OF OBJECTS PER SE.

We cannot be ignorant of any kind of objects without a subject: in other words, there can be no ignorance of objects *per se*, or out of relation to a mind.

DEMONSTRATION.

We can be ignorant only of what can possibly be known (Prop. III. Agnoiology). But objects without a subject cannot possibly be known (Props. I. and II. Epistemology). Therefore we cannot be ignorant of objects without a subject; and thus there can be no ignorance of objects *per se*.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. The truths of the agnoiology now come down in a torrent. The epistemology has unlocked all the sluices. The opening propositions of the agnoi- The truths now pour down fast.

PROP. IV.

ology have cleared away all obstructions which might remain; and we have now little more to do than to look on while the waters take their own unimpeded course. The counter-propositions will be rapidly swept away before the irresistible flood.

Fourth counter-proposition—is swept away.

2. *Fourth Counter-proposition.*—"We can be ignorant of objects without a subject; in other words, we can be, and we are, ignorant of objects *per se*, or out of relation to a mind." This counter-proposition goes down in an instant. There can be no ignorance, in any quarter, of an object without a subject or mind, simply because there can be no knowledge, in any quarter, of an object without a subject or mind.

PROPOSITION V.

IGNORANCE OF MATTER PER SE.

We cannot be ignorant of material things out of all relation to a mind, subject, or self: in other words, there can be no ignorance of matter *per se*.

DEMONSTRATION.

MATERIAL things out of all relation to a mind, subject, or self, cannot possibly be known (Prop. IV. Epistemology). But there can be no ignorance of what cannot possibly be known (Prop. III. Agnoiology). Therefore we cannot be ignorant of material things out of all relation to a mind, subject, or self; in other words, there can be no ignorance of matter *per se*.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. This proposition is merely a special application of the preceding more general theorem. But in

PROP. V.

laying the foundations of a science, it is better to over-do than to under-do the work. Part of the business of the epistemology was, by means of strict demonstration, to run a number of things, which have hitherto been a source of much trouble to philosophy, into a position in which it is evident that there can be no knowledge of them: the main business of the agnoiology is to run these same things, also by means of strict demonstration, into a position in which it is evident that there can be ignorance of them, and thus to disable them from operating any longer as impediments to the onward march of speculation. This tactic is now humbly submitted to the judgment of philosophers, as the only true dialectical art, and as the only method by which the highest problems of philosophy can be settled, without any further appeal being competent.

The main business of the agnoiology.

2. The execution of this achievement—which is no optional or arbitrary stratagem devised by an individual theorist, but an inevitable evolution of the catholic understanding, thinking, not as it wishes, but as it must,—bears evidence to the advantage which accrues from a steadfast contemplation of the necessary truths of reason, and to the loss and disadvantage which ensue from their neglect. Many philosophers had eliminated matter *per se*, things by and in themselves, from our knowledge; but having done so, on the mistaken ground of a special incom-

The disadvantage of not studying necessary truth.

petency in the human faculties to apprehend them in that condition, they were unable to eliminate them from our ignorance. In point of fact, the very door which shut them out of our knowledge opened for them a refuge under the cover, or within the pale, of our ignorance. And there, accordingly, matter *per se* has stuck until this time, — a dark and defiant inscrutability.

The doctrine of ignorance entertained by psychology and common opinion.

3. Hence the agnoiology hitherto propounded by philosophers, in so far as they have touched loosely on this subject, has been a tissue of contradictions, inasmuch as it represents us as ignorant of that which it is not possible for any intelligence to be ignorant of, and which we cannot suppose ourselves ignorant of without violating the first principle of reason. Here, no less than in their opinions as to knowledge, ordinary thinking and psychological science move in a series of contradictions, which have their origin in a neglect of the necessary truths of reason, and which, as in the epistemology, require to be corrected by the substitution of true ideas in the place of contradictory inadvertencies.

The advantage of studying necessary truth.

4. These contradictions are corrected in the theory of ignorance, which is now in the course of being constructed; and, as has been said, it owes its whole strength to a persevering contemplation of the necessary truths of reason. Unlike the ordinary doctrine

PROP. V.

which discharges matter *per se* from our knowledge, on the grounds of the limitation of our cognitive faculties, and thus consigns it to the province of our ignorance, this system eliminates it from our knowledge on the necessary principles of all reason, and thus eliminates it equally from our ignorance. It shows that matter *per se* is not a thing to be known on any terms by any intelligence, because oneself or the ego must always be known along with it;—in short, it dissolves into a contradiction this hitherto obstinate insolubility, and thus expels it from our ignorance just as much as from our knowledge, because it is obvious that there can be no ignorance of the contradictory, or of that of which there can be no knowledge. If any flaw can be detected in this reasoning, its author will be the first to admit that these Institutes are, from beginning to end, a mere rope of sand; but if no flaw can be detected in it, he begs to crave for them the acknowledgment that they are a chain of adamant.

The agnoiology carries out the work of the epistemology.

5. The agnoiology carries out and completes the work entered on in the epistemology. In the epistemology we beheld only the backs—the dorsal fins, if we may so speak—of the necessary truths; in the agnoiology we see under them, and all round them. We look upon them—like Horace's first mariner on the swimming sea-monsters—*siccis oculis*, as they turn up their shadowy sides, and gleaming abdo-

mina. In the former section it was shown that there could be no knowledge of their opposites; in the present section it is shown that there can be no ignorance of their opposites. Thus all those things which we are prevented from knowing by the necessary laws of all reason, are struck down right and left, and are exterminated in their ultimate citadel of refuge—the stronghold, namely, of our ignorance—to which they have always hitherto betaken themselves when expelled from our cognition and conception, (see Prop. XI. Epistemology, Obs. 1.) This operation effectually clears the ground, as will be seen in the sequel, for the establishment of a demonstrated and impregnable ontology. PROP. V.

6. It may be proper to explicate this doctrine somewhat more fully, and to point out certain historical circumstances connected with it—the corresponding counter-proposition being first of all subjoined. *Fifth Counter-proposition:* "We are altogether ignorant of material things out of all relation to a mind, subject, or self; in other words, we are profoundly ignorant of matter *per se*." Fifth counter-proposition.

7. Many philosophers have seen that the human mind cannot know things *by and in themselves*, because it can know them only as modified and supplemented by its own faculties of cognition; in other words, that it can know them only as *seen* things, Psychological conclusion as to our ignorance of matter *per se*.

PROP. V.

as *touched* things, and so forth—some subjective contribution being always added to the thing, and the total object apprehended being thus a composite product made up of a part which was objective, and a part which was subjective. Hence they concluded, very rashly and inconsiderately, that we were ignorant of the objective part *per se*, or separated from the subjective part. They adopted this counter-proposition. They gave out that we were ignorant of matter *per se*, of things by and in themselves. This conclusion is more particularly embraced and insisted upon by Kant.

It rests on a contradictory assumption.

8. This conclusion, however, rests on an assumption which contradicts the most strongest and essential principles of reason. It is founded on the assumption that these things may *possibly* be known as they are, by and in themselves, and out of relation to all intelligence. This premiss must be postulated by those who maintain that we are ignorant of material things *per se*; because it would be manifestly absurd to assert that we could be ignorant of what could not possibly be known. This, then, is their postulation; and if it were true, or if it could be conceded, their conclusion would be perfectly legitimate.

9. But the whole tenor of this work has proved that the postulation in question is contradictory. It

stands opposed to the primary law of all knowledge, as expressed in the first proposition of the epistemology, which declares that all cognition of material or other things *per se* is impossible, inasmuch as every intelligence (actual or possible) which apprehends material things must apprehend itself along with them; in other words, must apprehend them, not *per se*, but *cum alio*. Hence the conclusion now under discussion is contradictory, because it is founded on an assumption which is contradictory: and thus the counter-proposition which contends for our ignorance of matter *per se*, or of the universe as it exists by and in itself, is annihilated by the artillery of necessary truth.

The psychological conclusion, therefore, is contradictory.

10. From these remarks it is obvious that Kant and other philosophers have fallen into the mistake of supposing that we could be ignorant of material things *per se* through an inattention to the causes which render them absolutely unknowable. They supposed that they were simply unknowable by us on account of the limitation or imperfection of our faculties of cognition, but that they were still possibly knowable by intelligences competent to know them. In the course of this work, however, it has been repeatedly shown that our incompetency to know matter *per se* is due to no such cause, but is attributable to the essential structure of all intelligence, and to the necessary laws of all cognition.

The origin of the psychological mistake pointed out.

PROP. V. Hence matter *per se* is not the simply unknowable and inconceivable to us—it is the absolutely unknowable and inconceivable in itself; in other words, it is the contradictory,—a consideration which dislodges it from our ignorance just as effectually as it dislodges it from our knowledge, as must be apparent to all who have mastered the very simple argument by which this conclusion is established.

No ontology is possible if we can be ignorant of matter *per se*.

11. Unless this conclusion were established, no ontology would be possible, and to the failure to establish it is to be attributed the shipwreck which all previous attempts to consolidate this department of metaphysical science have suffered. Ontology, or the science of true Being, undertakes to demonstrate what true Being is, what alone absolutely exists. But our ignorance being, beyond all question, excessive, we must get the ontological demonstration into such a shape that we shall be able to affix the same predicate to absolute existence—to declare with certainty what it is, whether we suppose ourselves to know it, or to be ignorant of it. By working the system into such a shape that the result is the same on either alternative, a valid ontology may be constructed. But if it were true that we could be ignorant of matter *per se*, an obstacle would be interposed which would frustrate all our endeavours. Because if we are ignorant of matter *per se*, and if we are also ignorant of absolute

existence (as may very well turn out to be the case), matter *per se* may, in these circumstances, be absolute existence, for anything that we can show to the contrary—or it may not be this. We are reduced to a condition of dubiety. We can neither affirm nor deny anything about "Being in itself" with any assured certainty. Our lips are sealed—our advance is blockaded. The issues of the system are sceptical and unsatisfactory; and we are driven to have recourse to those arts of vague conjecture and loose declamation which genuine speculation disdains. But let it be once proclaimed and demonstrated, as it has now been, that we cannot (without running into absurdity) suppose ourselves ignorant of matter *per se* any more than we can suppose ourselves cognisant of it,—and at the blast of that trumpet down fall all the obstructions and defences which have fortified, from time immemorial, the enchanted castle of ontology.

PROP. V.

PROPOSITION VI.

IGNORANCE OF THE UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR.

We cannot be ignorant either of the universal element of cognition *per se*, or of the particular element of cognition *per se*.

DEMONSTRATION.

We cannot be ignorant of the universal element apart from the particular element, or of the particular element apart from the universal element of cognition, because (by Prop. VI. Epistemology) there can be no knowledge of the universal apart from the particular, or of the particular apart from the universal. But what there can be no knowledge of, there can be no ignorance of (Prop. III. Agnoiology). Therefore we cannot be ignorant of the universal element of cognition *per se*, or of the particular element of cognition *per se*.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. Just as the preceding propositions (IV. and V.)

are the obverse of the second and fourth of the epistemology; so this proposition is the obverse of the sixth of the epistemology. It excludes from our ignorance the universal and the particular elements of cognition, when unaccompanied by each other—just as Proposition VI. of the epistemology excluded them from our knowledge. PROP. VI. Effect of this proposition.

2. *Sixth Counter-proposition.*—"We can be ignorant of the universal element of cognition *per se*, and also of the particular element *per se*." Sixth counter-proposition.

3. Like Counter-proposition VI. of the epistemology, this counter-proposition makes no distinction between elements of cognition and kinds of cognition; or rather it mistakes elements for kinds, and hence it falls into a contradiction. If the particular and the universal were kinds of cognition, it would be quite possible for us to be ignorant of either without being ignorant of the other; because, in that case, it would be possible for either to be known without the other being known. But, since the particular and the universal are not kinds, but are mere elements of cognition, it is not possible for us to be ignorant of either without being ignorant of the other, because it is not possible for either to be known without the other being known. The error which it involves.

PROPOSITION VII.

IGNORANCE OF THE EGO PER SE.

We cannot be ignorant of the ego *per se;* in other words, there can be no ignorance of the mind in a state of pure indetermination, or with no thing or thought present to it.

DEMONSTRATION.

THERE can be no ignorance of the ego or mind *per se*, because (by Prop. IX. Epistemology) there can be no knowledge of it; and because (by Prop. III. Agnoiology) there can be no ignorance of that of which there can be no knowledge.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

Design and effect of this proposition.

1. This proposition, which is the obverse of the ninth of the epistemology, is designed to protect the reader, whom the latter proposition has saved from

the contradiction involved in the supposition that there can be any knowledge of the ego *per se*, from falling into the opposite contradiction of supposing that there can be any ignorance. PROP. VII.

2. *Seventh Counter-proposition.*—"We can be ignorant, and are ignorant, of the ego *per se*; in other words, there can be, and there is, an ignorance of the mind in a state of pure indetermination, or with no thing or thought present to it." This counter-proposition is sufficiently demolished by the antagonist proposition, and may be left to expire without further comment. Seventh counter-proposition.

3. The present and preceding propositions (IV. V. VI. VII.) have fixed what there can *not* be an ignorance of: the next article settles what alone there *can* be an ignorance of. What the agnoiology does not.

PROPOSITION VIII.

THE OBJECT OF ALL IGNORANCE.

The object of all ignorance, whatever it may be, is always something more than is usually regarded as the object. It always is, and must be, not any particular thing merely, but the synthesis of the particular and the universal: it must always consist of a subjective as well as of an objective element; in other words, the object of all ignorance is, of necessity, some-object-*plus*-some-subject.

DEMONSTRATION.

THERE can be an ignorance only of the knowable (Prop. III. Agnoiology). But the only knowable is the union of the objective and subjective—the synthesis of the universal and particular—the concretion of the ego and the non-ego. (Props. I., II. III. VI. and IX. Epistemology). Therefore there can be an

ignorance only of the union of the objective and subjective, only of the synthesis of the universal and particular, only of the concretion of the ego and the non-ego; in other words, the object of all ignorance is, of necessity, some-object-*plus*-some-subject. PROP. VIII.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. Just as Proposition II. of the epistemology fixes what the object of all possible knowledge is, so this proposition fixes what the object of all possible ignorance is; and, moreover, just as the object of all knowledge is determined by a reference to the law of all knowledge laid down in Proposition I. of the epistemology, so the object of all ignorance is determined by a reference to the law of all ignorance given out in the third of the agnoiology. Once concede (and how can the concession be evaded?) that a self or subject must be known along with all that is known, and subject *plus* object becomes of necessity the only possible object of cognition—the only knowable: once concede (and how can the concession be evaded?) that there can be an ignorance only of the knowable, and object *plus* subject becomes of necessity the only possible object of ignorance—the only ignorable—if so barbarous a word be permissible. Thus the main purpose of this section of the science is attained, which was to demonstrate the coincidence of the result of the agnoiology

Relation of this proposition to Prop. II. of the epistemology.

PROP. VIII. with the result of the epistemology, or to show that the only object of all knowledge is also the only object of all ignorance. (*See* Introduction, § 60).

The object of ignorance is neither nothing nor the contradictory.

2. Novel, and somewhat startling, as this doctrine may seem, it will be found, on reflection, to be the only one which is consistent with the dictates of an enlightened common sense; and the more it is scrutinised, the truer and the more impregnable will it appear. If we are ignorant at all (and who will question our ignorance?) we must be ignorant of something; and this something is not nothing, nor is it the contradictory. That is admitted on all hands. But every attempt to fix the object of our ignorance as anything but object + subject *must* have the effect of fixing it either as nothing, or as the contradictory. Let it be fixed as things *per se*, or as thoughts *per se*—that is, without any subject; but things or thoughts, without any subject, are the contradictory, inasmuch as they are the absolutely unknowable and inconceivable. Therefore, unless we can be ignorant of the contradictory (a supposition which is itself contradictory, and in the highest degree absurd), we cannot be ignorant of things *per se*, or of thoughts *per se*. Again, let it be fixed as subject *per se*, as the ego with no thing or thought present to it. But the subject *per se* is equally contradictory with object *per se*. It cannot be known on any terms by any intelligence; and, therefore,

unless we entertain the absurd supposition that we can be ignorant of the contradictory, we cannot be ignorant of the subject, or ego, or mind, *per se*. Again, let the object of our ignorance be fixed as nothing. But who was ever so foolish as to maintain that we were ignorant of nothing? By the very terms of the research, in which our ignorance is admitted, we confess ourselves to be ignorant of something. And therefore, since this something cannot be things by themselves, or the non-ego *per se*, and cannot be the mind by itself, or the ego *per se*, and moreover cannot be nothing, it must be the synthesis of things and some mind—the non-ego *plus* some ego — in short, some-object-plus-some-subject. If any other alternative is left which the object of our ignorance may be, this system will be glad to learn what that alternative is. PROP. VIII.

3. It is scarcely credible that, at this time of day, any philosophical opinion should be absolutely original, or that any philosophical truth, of which no previous hint exists in any quarter, should now, for the first time, be brought to light. Nevertheless, the doctrine now under consideration is believed to be altogether new. If it is not so, the present writer will be ready to surrender it to any prior claimant who may be pointed out, and to give honour to whom honour is due. But meanwhile, this system may be permitted to hold possession of it as its own peculiar It is believed that this doctrine is new.

PROP. VIII.

discovery — a circumstance which is mentioned, because those who may favour these Institutes with their attention, may perhaps have some inclination to know wherein, more particularly, their originality is supposed to consist. They claim to have announced for the first time the true law of ignorance, and to have deduced from it its consequences.

What has caused this doctrine to be missed.

4. If this doctrine of ignorance has been missed by previous inquirers, the cause of the oversight is to be found in the inaccuracy of their observations in regard to the object of all knowledge. Until this had been fixed as consisting necessarily of an objective and a subjective element, no theory determining demonstrably the object of all ignorance was possible. But we have seen throughout the epistemology, how loose, wavering, inexact, erroneous, and indeed contradictory, the opinions of philosophers in general, and of psychologists in particular, have been in regard to the object of knowledge; and hence it is not surprising that their opinions should have been equally confused, or rather more confused and unsettled, in regard to the object of ignorance. Many previous approximations, indeed, have been made to the true theory of knowledge. It has been seen, more than once, that the unity of object and subject is the only possible object of cognition. But this doctrine, not having been worked through all its phases, or followed out into

all its consequences, remained, as has been said, a mere approximation to the truth. It was left very far in arrear; and hence the true doctrine of ignorance, which depends entirely on the perfecting of that antecedent speculation, has never shown itself until now. PROP. VIII.

5. Another cause of the omission is to be found in the circumstance that philosophers hitherto have been satisfied with making our ignorance a theme for moral declamation, instead of making it a subject for metaphysical inquiry. Its quantity has distracted their attention from its quality. "Heu, quantum est quod nescimus!" exclaim they pathetically. "What an immensity of ignorance is ours!" True; but these whinings will never teach us what ignorance is, what its law is, and what its object is; and this alone is what we, as searchers after truth, are interested in finding out. To tell us *how much* a thing is, will never teach us *what* it is, as our psychologists, moralising on the boundlessness of human ignorance, seem to suppose. "What does this cheese *consist of?*" says a customer to his grocer. "Consist of!" answers the man—"consist of; why, *weighs* twenty pounds to a hair, and *that* is what it consists of." Our psychologists are that grocer. We ask them *what* ignorance is, and *what* we are ignorant of? and they reply that, while our knowledge is as mere dust in the balance, our ignorance Another circumstance which has caused it to be missed.

PROP. VIII.

is *so great* that it might ballast the whole British navy. This, as has been said, is to mistake a question as to quality, for a question as to quantity—rather a serious error for a philosopher to fall into.

In fixing the object of ignorance this proposition does not deny its magnitude.

6. It must not be supposed that this proposition by which the limits of our ignorance are marked out, and its object defined and demonstrated, has any tendency to question the extent, or to deny the magnitude of our ignorance. It rather doubles it. This circumscription leaves to our ignorance "ample room and verge enough"—as will be apparent immediately. Its effect merely is to prevent us from thinking or talking absurdly about ignorance. In pointing out the object of all ignorance, it fixes merely the bounding extremes, the standard factors, the supporting uprights, as they may be termed, which limit ignorance, properly so called, to its own *entire* object, and prevent it both from slipping over upon nonsensical *half*-objects, and from being confounded with that inevitable nescience of the contradictory which is the prime characteristic of reason, but which it is extremely apt to be mistaken for, unless due precaution be observed to guard against so portentous an inadvertency.

7. Further, it must be borne in mind that this proposition does not profess to define the object of all ignorance in terms more definite than the general

PROP. VIII.

How far the object of ignorance is definable, and how far it is not definable.

statement that it must always be a thing or a thought of some kind or other in union with an intelligent mind. It must be this, because this synthesis alone can be known. The system, however, is very far from professing to declare what the unknown things or thoughts may be, or what the powers of the unknown subject may be, or what the special nature of the unknown synthesis may be which subsists between it and its objects. All these may be, and indeed are (except in our own individual cases), points of which we are profoundly ignorant, and about which we cannot speak with any degree of certainty. So that lying between the two extremes which bound the object of our ignorance—a subject on the one hand, and objects on the other—there is scope for an infinitude of unknown details. We are ignorant of the particular element which is in synthesis with the universal subject, we are ignorant of the special capacities of the universal subject, we are ignorant of the nature of the synthesis. In a word, all that can be definitely and demonstrably fixed as the object of all ignorance is, as has been said, that it is *some* subject, or ego, in union with *some* object, or non-ego. The particular element of cognition—the non-ego—is contingent, variable, indefinite, and inexhaustible (see Prop. VI. Epistem., Obs. 2), *à fortiori* the particular element of ignorance—the non-ego—is contingent, variable, indefinite, and inexhaustible, and therefore not to be condescended upon.

PROP. VIII.

The advantage of discriminating the necessary from the contingent laws of knowledge.

8. The advantage of discriminating the necessary from the contingent conditions of knowledge effected in the twenty-second proposition of the Epistemology now becomes apparent. The object of our ignorance must be a subject *plus* some object. But the subject comprised in this synthesis need not know things in the ways in which we know them, but may be cognisant of them in ways totally different, and the objects comprised in this synthesis may be altogether different from the objects of which we are cognisant. All that is fixed by reason as necessary is, that the object of which we are ignorant should be objects *plus* a subject; because any other object than this is contradictory, as has been shown, again and again, on necessary grounds of reason. But had this analysis not been effected, the important conclusion referred to could not have been reached. If the discrimination had not been made—in other words, if the necessary laws had been reduced to a level with the contingent laws—objects *per se*, or without any subject, would have been fixed as the object of our ignorance; in which case materialism would have triumphed, and all the higher interests of man, in behalf of which speculation so zealously contends, would have been placed in jeopardy: reasoning at least could have done nothing towards their extrication and security. Again, if the contingent laws had been elevated to a level with the necessary laws, the only possible object of our ignorance would have been a

subject apprehending things *exactly as we apprehend them*. This would have been the only possible object of ignorance, because, in the circumstances supposed, it would have been the only possible object of knowledge; in which case the sophism of Protagoras would have been verified, that man is the measure of the universe. Our ontology would have been anthropomorphical and revolting. But the accomplishment of the analysis referred to, extricates the system from this dilemma. By distinguishing the necessary from the contingent laws of cognition, we were able to obtain demonstrably in the epistemology a mind, or self, or subject plus *some* objects (though *what* objects it is impossible to say—this being the particular, variable, and inexhaustible element of cognition) as the only possible object of all knowledge; and in like manner, this distinction enables us to obtain demonstrably in the agnoiology a mind, or self, or subject plus *some* objects (though *what* objects it is impossible to say—this being the particular, variable, and inexhaustible element of ignorance) as the only possible object of all ignorance. The system is thus advancing in strength towards the position where ontology lies intrenched; it is drawing closer and closer its lines of circumvallation around the encampment of Absolute Existence, and has already driven in its outposts. PROP. VIII.

9. From these remarks it will be seen, that this

PROP. VIII.

This system is more humble in its pretensions than other systems.

doctrine, so far from denying our ignorance, rather represents it as double. In fixing the object of ignorance as non-contradictory—in other words, in insisting (and in proving) that whenever we are ignorant of an object we must also be ignorant of a subject—this system teaches that we are ignorant of an intelligible, that is, not-nonsensical, *whole;* whereas ordinary thinking and psychology teach that we are ignorant of an unintelligible and nonsensical *half* (objects *per se*). It is true that the system, in concluding that there can be no ignorance of the contradictory, limits or abridges our ignorance in that particular direction. But, as has been said, it extends it in another direction, by showing that, in so far as we are ignorant, our ignorance must have for its object not merely one of the factors or elements of cognition, but must have for its object both of them,—the universal no less than the particular element, the subjective no less than the objective factor. Whenever we suppose that we can be ignorant of either of these without being ignorant of the other, we suppose that we can be ignorant of the contradictory,—an opinion which every one who reflects upon its absurdity will be inclined forthwith to abandon. Hence it is submitted that these Institutes are more humble in their pretensions, and acknowledge more fully the extent of man's ignorance, than any of those systems which lay claim ostentatiously to the virtue of humility, and talk about the infinite

particulars which lie beyond our cognisance, without considering very critically what they are saying. PROP. VIII.

10. *Eighth Counter-proposition.*—"The object of all ignorance, whatever it may be, need not be more than what is usually regarded as the object. It need not be the synthesis of the particular and the universal; but it may be, and it is, mere particular things by themselves. It need not consist of a subjective and an objective element—but it may consist of the objective element merely, or of the subjective element merely; in other words, a subject without any object, or objects without any subject, may be the object of our ignorance." Eighth counter-proposition.

11. To give stability to this counter-proposition, either of two points would require to be made good,—either, first, that objects without any subject or self can be known, and that self or the subject without any object can be known; or, secondly, that there can be an ignorance of what cannot possibly be known. If either of these points could be established, the counter-proposition would stand firm, and Proposition VIII. would be overthrown. But it is conceived that both of these positions have been thoroughly subverted in the course of these discussions, and directly opposite conclusions demonstratively reached; and therefore this counter-proposition must just submit quietly to be the way of all its brethren. The grounds on which it rests are false.

PROP. VIII.

Illustration of the difference between the speculative and the ordinary view in regard to the object of ignorance.

12. The following illustration will throw additional light on the difference between the doctrine here advocated in regard to the object of our ignorance and the opinion maintained by ordinary thinking. In our ordinary moods we conceive that objects without any subject are, to a large extent, the objects of our ignorance; and we hold this opinion, because, in our ordinary moods, we suppose that objects without any subject are, to some extent, the objects of our knowledge. But in our ordinary moods we never fall into the absurdity of supposing that *jects* without any *ob* are the objects of our ignorance. If a man were told that *jects* without *ob* were what he was ignorant of, he would have some reason to complain that he was being made a fool of. He always conceives himself to be ignorant of what is expressed by the *whole* word "object," and not of what is expressed by any one of its syllables. In the same way these Institutes would be stultified if they were to admit that objects without a subject could be the objects of our ignorance, because *object-plus-subject* is *their* whole word for the mind—just as *object* is the whole word for the mind, in the estimation of popular thinking. "Object *plus* subject" is to speculation precisely what "object" is to ordinary thinking; and hence, just as ordinary thinking always supposes that objects of one kind or another are the only objects either of our knowledge or of our ignorance, and would be outrage

by the statement that a mere part or syllable of this word could express either what we know, or what we are ignorant of—so speculative thinking maintains, and calls upon people to understand, that objects-*plus*-a-subject are the only objects either of our knowledge or of our ignorance, and is equally outraged by the supposition that any of the syllables of this entire and indivisible mental word can give a true or intelligible expression either to what we know or to what we are ignorant of. The want of accordance between language and thought—or, otherwise expressed, the fact that thought is *not* susceptible of being divided or split down into fractions to such an extent as words *appear* to divide it into, and consequently the necessity of guarding against the supposition that the division of words has a corresponding analysis of thoughts—might furnish a theme for much interesting discussion; but this is a topic which cannot be pursued at present. PROP. VIII.

13. As a corollary of this proposition, it follows that object + subject is the only substantial and absolute in ignorance, just as this synthesis is the only substantial and absolute in cognition. It is, however, unnecessary to enunciate this truth in a distinct and separate proposition; suffice it to say, that the mere factors of this synthesis cannot either of them be the substantial and absolute in ignorance, because there can be no knowledge of them apart The substantial and absolute in ignorance.

PROP. VIII.

from each other; and there can be no ignorance of what there can be no knowledge of. Hence, the only absolute and substantial reality of which we can be ignorant is a subject in union with objects of some kind or other.

The main result of the agnoiology shortly stated.

14. The short summing up is this—a summary which refers in part to the epistemology. The ordinary thinker—that is, every man in his habitual and unphilosophical moods—supposes, first, that he can know *less* than he can really know; hence he supposes that *mere* objects can be known. Secondly, he supposes that he can think of *less* than can be known; hence he supposes that *mere* objects can be conceived. Thirdly, he supposes that he can be ignorant of *less* than can be known; hence he supposes that *mere* objects are what he can be ignorant of. The first and second of these inadvertencies are corrected in the epistemology. It is there shown that we cannot know less than we can really know, and that, therefore, *mere* objects cannot be known, but only objects along with oneself or the subject; further, that we cannot think of less than can be known; and that, therefore, *mere* objects cannot be conceived, but only objects along with some self or subject. The main business of the agnoiology has been to correct the third inadvertency, and to show that we cannot be ignorant of *less* than can be known, and that, therefore, *mere* objects cannot be what we

are ignorant of, but only objects along with some self or subject. From these considerations it is obvious that philosophers have erred, not, as is usually supposed, in consequence of striving to know *more* than they are competent to know, but in consequence of striving to know *less* than they are permitted to know by the laws and limits of intelligence; and further, that they have gone astray, not, as is usually supposed, in consequence of denying our ignorance to be *as great* as it really is, but in consequence of maintaining that our ignorance is not *so great* as it really is—in other words, in consequence of maintaining that we are ignorant of *less* than it is possible for any intelligence to be ignorant of. PROP. VIII.

15. In conclusion, and in reference to what is said in the first proposition of the agnoiology (Obs. 6.), this remark has to be added, that all the counter-propositions would have stood their ground, and the propositions would consequently have been overthrown, if a first and second counter-proposition could have been laid down and proved. Let it be assumed as Counter-proposition I. that ignorance is no imperfection or defect, and a ground would be secured for a second counter-proposition denying that ignorance is possibly remediable; because ignorance is remediable only on the ground that it is a defect. This basis, if it could be conceded, would establish all the other counter-positions as true; for if ignorance is not a Concluding remark.

PROP. VIII.

defect, and is not remediable, there may, indeed there must, be an ignorance of what cannot possibly be known. Hence Proposition III. would fall. Again, if there could be an ignorance of what could not possibly be known, there might, and must, be an ignorance of objects *per se*, and of material things *per se*: Propositions IV. and V. would fall. Again, if there could be an ignorance of what could not possibly be known, Proposition VI. would fall; because, in these circumstances, there might be an ignorance of the particular without the universal element of cognition, or of the universal without the particular element. Again, Proposition VII. would fall for the same reason. Further, the same concession would effect the destruction of Proposition VIII.; because, if there could be an ignorance of what could not possibly be known, object-*plus*-subject would no longer be the only possible object of ignorance. In short, the overthrow of the whole agnoiology would be the consequence of the denial of the proposition which asserts that ignorance is a defect or imperfection. But inasmuch as this denial is absurd and demonstratively false, it is conceived that the theory is in no danger of being subverted on that or on any other ground. For the satisfaction, however, of those who may refuse to embrace this new theory of ignorance, the logical data on which their opposition must be grounded have been considerately supplied.

PROPOSITION I.

THE THREE ALTERNATIVES AS TO ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE.

That which truly is, or, as it shall be usually termed, Absolute Existence, is either, *first*, That which we know; or it is, *secondly*, That which we are ignorant of; or it is, *thirdly*, That which we neither know nor are ignorant of; and no other alternative is possible.

DEMONSTRATION.

If a thing is not *this*, it may be *that*; but if it is not this, and not that, it *must* be neither this nor that. (This is one of the strongest forms in which the law of contradiction, the criterion of all necessary truth, can be expressed). Hence if absolute existence is not that which we know, it may be that which we are ignorant of; but if it is not that which we know, and not that which we are ignorant of, it must be that which we neither know nor are igno-

PROP. I. rant of. Therefore absolute existence is either, *first*, That which we know; or, *secondly*, That which we are ignorant of; or, *thirdly*, That which we neither know nor are ignorant of; and no other alternative is possible.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

The problem of ontology stated.

1. The problem of ontology, as announced in the Introduction, § 54, is, What is? in the proper and emphatic sense of the word IS. What absolutely and independently exists? What, and what alone, possesses a clear, detached, emancipated, substantial, genuine, or *unparasitical* Being? What can that which possesses this be declared to be? What is its character? What predicate can be attached to it? This is the problem which ontology is called upon to resolve; and it will be seen as we advance, that without the whole of the preceding demonstrations, this question is insoluble, but with them its reasoned settlement may be reached.

Its three alternatives are exhaustive.

2. This proposition opens the way. It exhibits the alternatives, any of which, so far as we see at present, Absolute Existence may be, and one or other of which it must be; for the three alternatives are exhaustive, as must be obvious to any one who considers the proposition even without the demonstration. Absolute existence may possibly be that

PROP. I.

which we are cognisant of, or it may possibly be that which we are ignorant of; but if it is not that which we are cognisant of, and not that which we are ignorant of, it must be that which we are neither cognisant of nor ignorant of; and no other alternative is possible. This conclusion seems sufficiently obvious. To those, however, who may desire a more concrete example of the kind of syllogism here employed, the following illustration will be of service: If it is not summer, it may be winter; but if it is not summer, and not winter, it must be neither summer nor winter. Therefore it is either summer or winter, or neither; and no other alternative as to time and season is possible. For suppose it to be spring; but spring is neither summer nor winter, and therefore the conclusion of the syllogism is unshaken. Such, *mutatis mutandis*, is the present reasoning in regard to Absolute Existence.

The third alternative has to be eliminated.

3. All the alternatives which Absolute Existence is capable of being, having been exhibited in this proposition, the next step which the system takes is to reduce these alternatives from three to two. This elimination is accomplished in Propositions II. III. IV. Meanwhile the counter-proposition is subjoined.

First counter-proposition.

4. *First Counter-proposition.*—"There are only two alternatives in regard to Absolute Existence. If Absolute Existence is not what we know, it must

PROP. I.

be what we are ignorant of; for there is no middle between knowledge and ignorance. Whatever we do not know, we must be ignorant of; in other words, it is impossible *neither* to know *nor* to be ignorant of a thing.

In what respect this counter-proposition is right.

5. There is nothing wrong in this counter-proposition, in so far as it maintains that there are only two alternatives in regard to absolute existence. This is the very conclusion which the ontology is proceeding to establish in the subsequent propositions; but it must be established in an orderly manner, and not taken for granted at the outset. At first sight the alternatives of Absolute Existence are apparently three, and accordingly they have been set forth as three in the opening proposition in order that the Theory of Being may be cleared from the very commencement, may proceed by deliberate and legitimate steps, and may leave in arrear or unremoved no difficulty or objection to which it may seem to be exposed. Its labours would have been considerably abridged had it held itself entitled to start from the affirmation that the alternatives of Absolute Existence are only two; but such a starting-point would have been not strictly legitimate.

6. The error which the counter-proposition presents is contained in the statement that there is no

SECTION III.

THE ONTOLOGY, OR THEORY OF BEING.

middle between knowledge and ignorance, and that whatever we do not know we must be ignorant of. As this doctrine—the law of excluded middle, as it is called—is nowhere very clearly explained, and seems to be insufficiently understood by philosophers in general, a few remarks may here be made in elucidation of it.

PROP. I.

In what respect it is wrong.

7. There is no medium, it is said, between knowing and being ignorant of a thing—we must either know it, or not know it. This is one of the forms of the law of contradiction (see Introduction, § 28), and under this expression it is called the law of excluded middle, which means that we have no alternative except either to know or to be ignorant of a thing; in other words, that it is impossible for us neither to know nor to be ignorant of it. If we do not know it, we must be ignorant of it; and conversely, if we are not ignorant of it, we must know it. Such is the law of excluded middle, considered in reference to knowledge and ignorance; and it is laid down by logicians as subject to no restriction or qualification.

The law of excluded middle stated.

8. It is obvious, however, that this law is subject to a very considerable restriction or qualification. It applies only to non-contradictory things. We must either know or be ignorant of whatever is non-contradictory, because whatever is non-contradictory is

How this law must be qualified.

PROP. I.

knowable, and, therefore, if we do not know it, we must be ignorant of it: there can be no doubt about that. But the case is very different in regard to the contradictory or absolutely unknowable: of this there can be no knowledge and no ignorance. Can any man be cognisant of two and two making five, or of two straight lines enclosing a space? No. Can any man be ignorant of these absurdities? Just as little. Speaking ironically, or in jest, a person might, indeed, say that he was ignorant of two and two making five, or of the *in*equality of the radii of a circle, but he could not say this seriously without talking irrationally. These instances are adduced merely as illustrations. But it is obvious that every contradictory, or whatever is absolutely unknowable, is that of which there can neither be any knowledge nor any ignorance. The law, therefore, of excluded middle must be accepted with this qualification, that it is valid and true only in reference to the non-contradictory.

Origin of the mistake in regard to this law.

9. The prevalent mistake on this subject has its origin in the cause alluded to in the Introduction, § 69, where it was stated that philosophers have generally confounded together under a common category the simply unknowable and inconceivable by us, and the absolutely unknowable and inconceivable in itself. The simply unknowable by us is excluded from our knowledge, but it is not excluded from our ignorance.

PROP. I.

In regard to this (the simply unknowable), there is no middle—a third alternative is excluded. We do not know it, and therefore we must be ignorant of it. Here the law applies; but the absolutely unknowable is excluded from our knowledge; and it is excluded equally from our ignorance. In regard to this, there is *nothing but* a third or middle alternative. We can neither know it, nor be ignorant of it. Here the law does not apply. Hence there is a middle between knowledge and ignorance; a middle which is excluded alike from our knowledge and from our ignorance, and this middle is the contradictory, or that which the laws of all reason prevent from being known on any terms by any intelligence. The counter-proposition, therefore, which lays down the law of excluded middle without any qualification and denies that it is subject to any limitation, is erroneous.

The want of a clear doctrine of the contradictory has been the cause of much error in philosophy.

10. One of the principal retarding causes of philosophy has been the want of a clear and developed doctrine of the contradictory. This desideratum could not be supplied so long as philosophers refused, as they have hitherto done, to found speculative science upon reason, and to carry it out from beginning to end, as a concatenated system of necessary truths. To this cause the error which we have just been considering, and many other errors, are to be attributed. Throughout these Institutes a correct

PROP. L

doctrine of the contradictory, showing distinctly what it is (namely, that it is either of the factors of cognition taken by itself, or apart from its co-factor), has been developed. And therefore it is to be hoped that the prospects of speculation may be brighter in time coming than they have been in time past.

Distinction between the singly and the doubly contradictory.

11. In further explanation of this doctrine, a distinction may here be pointed out between the *singly* contradictory and the *doubly* contradictory. The two co-factors of cognition (subject and object), when considered *singulatim*, or apart from each other, are only the singly contradictory,—a centreless circle, or a stick with only one end, is the doubly contradictory. To redeem any object (a stick, or a circle, or whatever it may be) from contradiction—in other words, to render it apprehensible—the subject must know itself along with it. Here only *one* supplementation is required—the *me* must be known along with the thing. But to redeem from contradiction a centreless circle or a stick with only one end, two supplementations are required: first, the centre must be supplied to the circle; and secondly, the *me* must, moreover, be taken into account.

PROPOSITION II.

A PREMISS BY WHICH THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE IS ELIMINATED.

Whatever we neither know nor are ignorant of is the contradictory.

DEMONSTRATION.

If that which we neither know nor are ignorant of were not the contradictory, it would be knowable; because whatever is not contradictory is knowable. But if it (that, viz., which we neither know nor are ignorant of) were knowable, we must either know it or be ignorant of it. If we know it, we cannot neither know it nor be ignorant of it; and if we are ignorant of it, we cannot neither know it nor be ignorant of it. Therefore whatever we neither know nor are ignorant of cannot be knowable; and not being knowable, it must be the contradictory; because everything except the contradictory is knowable. Consequently, whatever we neither know nor are ignorant of, is, and must be, the contradictory.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

PROP. II.

Why this proposition is introduced.

1. This proposition and the next supply the premises by means of which Proposition IV. is enabled to eliminate or get rid of the third alternative in regard to Absolute Existence—thus reducing the alternatives from three to two.

Second counter-proposition.

2. *Second Counter-proposition.*—The contradictory is a topic which has never engaged the attention either of natural thinking or of psychological science; and therefore there is, in this case, no exact counter-proposition. At any rate, it is a mere repetition of the first, and may be laid down in the following terms: "There is no middle between knowledge and ignorance; we must either know or be ignorant of a thing, and we cannot neither know nor be ignorant of anything."

To what extent it is true.

3. Not if the thing is knowable or intelligible,—in that case, certainly, we cannot neither know it, nor be ignorant of it, but must either know it or be ignorant of it. But if the thing is absolutely unknowable or contradictory, or that which is not to be known at all, or on any terms by any intelligence, in that case, it is certain that we can neither know it nor be ignorant of it. When taken with this explanation or qualification (see preceding Prop., Obs. 5-9), the correctness of the counter-propo-

sition may be conceded. At any rate, it is unnecessary to trouble ourselves with it any further, because the third alternative concluded for in Proposition I., which this counter-proposition rejects summarily, and without a hearing, is the very point which this system rejects after having submitted it (in Props. I. II. III. IV.) to a fair and legitimate trial. So that the system may here take credit for having raised, of its own accord, and surmounted by legitimate means, a difficulty or objection which would not have been thrown in its way, either by ordinary thinking or by psychology. If this third alternative could not have been logically got rid of, the ontology would have been brought to a stand-still.

PROP. II.

PROPOSITION III.

A PREMISS BY WHICH THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE IS ELIMINATED.

Absolute Existence, or Being in itself, is not the contradictory.

DEMONSTRATION.

THERE is no absurdity or contradiction involved in the supposition that something (whatever it may be), really, and truly, and absolutely exists. And therefore, inasmuch as no absurdity or contradiction attaches to this supposition, no absurdity or contradiction attaches to that to which this supposition refers—namely, to Being in itself. Consequently Absolute Existence, or Being in itself, is not the contradictory.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. Although a demonstration of this proposition is given, none, strictly speaking, is required. The

PROP. III.

The truth of this proposition is presupposed by the very nature of the inquiry.

proposition is postulated or presupposed by the very terms of the inquiry, and must be conceded by all who enter on the study of metaphysics. The ultimate problem of the science is, *What is truth?*—(See Introduction, § 54.) This problem necessarily takes for granted two points: first, that truth is; and secondly, that truth is not nonsense or the contradictory. The science is not called upon to prove *that* truth is, and that it is not the contradictory. This must be conceded. The science is merely called upon to find out and prove *what* truth is; it merely undertakes to affix to truth some predicate descriptive and explanatory of its character. In the same way the science is not called upon to prove either *that* Absolute Existence is, or that it is not the contradictory. It takes, and must be allowed to take, this for granted: it is merely called upon to find out and demonstrate *what* Absolute Existence is; in other words, to affix to it some predicate declaratory of its nature and character. In this respect the metaphysician resembles the mathematician who is not called upon to prove either that his diagrams *are*, or that they involve no contradiction, but simply to demonstrate *what* relations they and their various parts bear to one another. So that if the foregoing demonstration should appear not altogether satisfactory, the reader is requested to remember that the proposition is one which the science is entitled to postulate, and one which even the most extrava-

PROP. III.

gant scepticism cannot call in question. No form of scepticism has ever questioned the fact *that* something absolutely exists, or has ever maintained that this something was the nonsensical. The sceptic, even when he carries his opinions to an extreme, merely doubts or denies our competency to find out and declare *what* absolutely exists.

Third counter-proposition. Why there is none.

2. There is no third counter-proposition; and the foregoing considerations sufficiently explain why there should be none. Psychology has never expressly maintained that Absolute Existence is the contradictory: she must be understood to hold that it is the simply inconceivable by us. But, in consequence of having neglected to draw a clear line of demarcation between these two categories—the simply inconceivable by us, and the absolutely inconceivable in itself—psychology has left her opinion even on this point in a state of ambiguity. She has nowhere expressly declared whether Absolute Existence is the simply inconceivable by us (*i. e.* the non-contradictory) or the absolutely inconceivable in itself (*i. e.* the contradictory). In short, she has overlooked altogether this most important distinction, and thus has contributed largely to that looseness of thought and equivocation of expression which have hitherto prevented the higher problems of philosophy from acquiring even an intelligible shape.

PROPOSITION IV.

ELIMINATES THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE.

Absolute Existence is not what we neither know nor are ignorant of.

DEMONSTRATION.

WHATEVER we neither know nor are ignorant of is the contradictory (Prop. II.) Absolute Existence is not the contradictory (Prop. III.) Therefore Absolute Existence is not what we neither know nor are ignorant of.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. This proposition clears off one of the alternatives in regard to Absolute Existence. In the next proposition the residuum which remains is enunciated and proved. What this proposition effects.

PROP. IV.

Fourth counter-proposition. Why there is none.

2. There is no fourth counter-proposition; because the system has now reached, by legitimate steps, the conclusion which Counter-proposition I. reached illegitimately and prematurely.

The previous propositions are preliminary. Prop. V. is the starting-point.

3. To some persons, the logical operation developed in the preceding propositions, by which the third alternative, in regard to Absolute Existence, is eliminated from the list, may appear superfluous. It is, indeed, by no means certain that the operation referred to is not superfluous. Its performance has been prompted by the anxiety to do the work completely, to deal with every difficulty which may arise, and to staunch all the possible sources of objection. To those, however, who think that it might have been dispensed with, the starting-point of the ontology will present itself in the next proposition.

PROPOSITION V.

THE REMAINING ALTERNATIVES.

Absolute Existence is either that which we know or that which we are ignorant of.

DEMONSTRATION.

It was proved by Proposition I. that Absolute Existence has only three alternative characters: it is either, first, that which we know; or, secondly, that which we are ignorant of; or, thirdly, that which we neither know nor are ignorant of. The third alternative has been excluded by Proposition IV. Absolute Existence, therefore, must be the one or other of the two remaining alternatives: in other words, it is either that which we know or that which we are ignorant of.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. The elimination of the third alternative, and the proof that Absolute Existence is either that

PROP. V.

This proposition secures the key of the ontology.

which we know or that which we are ignorant of, secures the key of the ontology, and renders her position impregnable. Her victory is now assured against whatever force may be brought against her. She has now but to put forth her hand to pluck the fruit of all her previous labours. Because the alternative characters of Absolute Existence having been reduced to two—in other words, Absolute Existence having been proved to be either that which we know or that which we are ignorant of, the system is able to deal with it and to declare what it is, whichever of the two alternatives be embraced. Should "Being in itself" be that which we know, the result of the epistemology enables us to affix to it a predicate declaratory of its nature—for the epistemology has settled what alone it is possible for us to know. Should "Being in itself" be held to be that which we are ignorant of, the result of the agnoiology (which has been proved to be coincident with the result of the epistemology) enables us to affix to it *the very same* predicate declaratory of its nature. Thus the system makes good its point, and redeems its pledge (see Introduction, § 60), whichever horn of the dilemma be presented to it, as shall be shown articulately in Proposition X. Meanwhile a few articles must be introduced for the purpose of clearing away the wrecks of antecedent systems, and of giving the finishing stroke to the cardinal doctrines

of psychology, which are still dragging out, in book and in lecture-room, a debilitated and semi-animate existence. PROP. V.

2. *Fifth Counter-proposition.*—There is no fifth counter-proposition, for the reason assigned under the preceding proposition (Obs. 2.) That we must be either cognisant or ignorant of Absolute Existence, is conceded both by ordinary thinking and by psychology. Fifth counter-proposition. Why there is none

PROPOSITION VI.

WHAT ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE IS NOT.

Absolute Existence is not matter *per se*: in other words, *mere* material things have no true and independent Being.

DEMONSTRATION.

MATTER *per se* is neither that which we know (Prop. IV. Epistemology) nor that which we are ignorant of (Prop. V. Agnoiology). But Absolute Existence is either that which we know or that which we are ignorant of (Prop. V. Ontology). Therefore Absolute Existence is not matter *per se*; in other words, *mere* material things have no true and independent Being.

Or again—Matter *per se* is the contradictory, inasmuch as it is necessarily unknowable by all intelligence (Prop. IV. Epistemology). But Absolute Existence is not the contradictory (Prop. III. Agnoiology). It may possibly be known. Therefore Absolute Existence is not matter *per se*, &c.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

PROP. VI.

Sixth counter-proposition.

1. *Sixth Counter-proposition.*—"Absolute Existence is, or at least may be, matter *per se;* in other words, *mere* material things have, or may have, a true and independent Being."

Is approved of by ordinary thinking, and by psychology.

2. There can be no doubt that ordinary thinking embraces this counter-proposition in its most dogmatical expression, and asserts positively that mere material things not only may have, but have a true and absolute and independent existence. Psychology, too, has a decided leaning towards this positive asseveration, which is advocated more particularly by our whole Scottish philosophy of common sense. After all that has been said, it is unnecessary to do more than refer to this opinion as part of the *debris* of a defunct and exploded psychology, which is now swept away and effaced for ever from science by these ontological institutes.

In what sense material things exist.

3. When it is asserted that material things have no *Absolute* Existence, this must not be confounded with the affirmation that they have no existence *at all.* They have a spurious, or inchoate, or dependent existence. This has always been conceded by genuine speculation, although even this kind of existence may have been denied to them by some spurious systems of idealism. But absolute or inde-

PROP. VI.

pendent existence only arises when the incipience of material things is supplemented by the element necessary to complete it. In short, they are what the Greek speculators called the μή ὄντα (that is, the contradictory), but they are not the οὐκ ὄντα (that is, the intelligibly non-existent). By themselves, material things are not *nothing*, but they are *nonsense*.

PROPOSITION VII.

WHAT ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE IS NOT.

Absolute existence is not the particular by itself, nor is it the universal by itself; in other words, particular things prescinded from the universal have no absolute existence, nor have universal things prescinded from the particular any absolute existence.

DEMONSTRATION.

THERE can be no knowledge of the particular by itself (Prop. VI. Epistemology). There can be no ignorance of the particular by itself (Prop. VI. Agnoiology). But absolute existence is that of which there is either a knowledge or an ignorance (Prop. V. Ontology). Therefore absolute existence is not the particular by itself. Again, there can be no knowledge of the universal by itself (Prop. VI. Epistemology). There can be no ignorance of the

PROP. VII.

universal by itself (Prop. VI. Agnoiology). But absolute existence is that of which there is either a knowledge or an ignorance (Prop. V. Ontology). Therefore absolute existence is not the universal by itself. And thus particular things prescinded from the universal have no absolute existence, nor have universal things prescinded from the particular any absolute existence.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

Seventh counter-proposition.

1. *Seventh Counter-proposition.* — "Particular things by themselves, or prescinded from the universal, have, or may have, an absolute existence — although it is absurd to suppose that universal things prescinded from the particular have any existence, or at least any existence out of the mind which fabricates them." This counter-proposition carries out into ontology the sixth counter-proposition of the epistemology. Both of them are false, and are subverted by their corresponding propositions.

PROPOSITION VIII.

WHAT ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE IS NOT.

Absolute Existence is not the ego *per se*, or the mind in a state of pure indetermination—that is, with no thing or thought present to it: in other words, the ego *per se* is not that which truly and absolutely exists.

DEMONSTRATION.

THE ego *per se*, or the mind in a state of pure indetermination, is what we cannot know (Prop. IX. Epistemology): it is what we cannot be ignorant of (Prop. VII. Agnoiology). But Absolute Existence is what we either know or are ignorant of (Prop. V. Ontology). Therefore Absolute Existence is not the ego *per se*, or the mind in a state of pure indetermination; in other words, the ego *per se* is not that which truly and absolutely exists.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

PROP. VIII.

Eighth counter-proposition.

1. *Eighth Counter-proposition.*—Absolute existence is, or may be, the ego *per se;* in other words, the mind in a state of pure indetermination, or with no thing or thought present to it, is, or may be, Being in itself.

Importance of the ego as a constituent of Absolute Existence.

2. It must be borne in mind, that although Absolute Existence cannot be attributed to the ego or mind *per se*, still this element is infinitely the more important of the two in the constitution of Absolute Existence, just as it is infinitely the more important of the two in the constitution of Absolute Cognition. In both cases this is the essential, eternal, and universal factor, while the other element is contingent, temporary, and evanescent.

Why the reduction of the ego *per se* to a contradiction is important.

3. It has further to be remarked that the reduction of the ego (or universal) *per se* to the condition of a contradiction is important on this account, that unless the reduction had been effected, matter (the particular) could not have been reduced to the predicament of a contradiction either; for the same measure which is dealt out to one of the factors of cognition must be dealt out to the other. But if matter *per se* had not been reduced to a contradiction, it could not have been disfranchised of Absolute Existence; in which case materialism, with all its gloomy consequences, would have carried, while it also blackened, the day.

PROPOSITION IX.

THE ORIGIN OF KNOWLEDGE.

Matter is not the cause of our perceptive cognitions; in other words, our knowledge of material things is not an effect proceeding from, and brought by, material things.

DEMONSTRATION.

MATTER is the particular part, or peculiar element, of some of our cognitions—of those, viz., which we term perceptions (Prop. VII. Epistemology). But the *part* of a cognition cannot be the *cause* of a cognition. Therefore matter is not the cause of our perceptive cognitions; in other words, our knowledge of material things is not an effect proceeding from, and brought about by, material things.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. It is at this place that the question as to the origin of our knowledge falls to be discussed, and

PROP. IX.

Question as to the origin of knowledge —has been erroneously treated.

that the opinions of philosophers respecting it come under review: for this question is ontological, just as the inquiry into the actual character and composition of our cognitions is epistemological. It is of the utmost importance that these inquiries should be kept distinct, and that the *nature* of our knowledge should be accurately ascertained, before any attempt is made to explain its *origin*. This order, however, has been reversed: philosophers have treated of the origin of knowledge before they had attained to any definite conception of its nature; they explored the causes of the fact, but the fact itself they left undetermined: and to this reversal of the right method of research are to be attributed all the perplexities and errors in which they got involved in the course of the controversy.

The assumption which vitiates the discussion.

2. The fundamental assumption which has hitherto rendered abortive every attempt to settle this question, is the hypothesis that matter exists, not as an element of cognition, but in an absolute capacity, or irrespective of all intelligence. Whether this assumption be true or not, it was not a position to start from. It is an ontological offshoot from an uncritical and erroneous epistemology. To comprehend the salient points of the controversy respecting the origin of knowledge, and the perplexities by which it has been beset at every stage, we have but to trace this assumption into its consequences.

PROP. IX.

3. The attribution of absolute existence to material things leads at once to the inference, that matter operates as a cause in the production of our cognitions. And accordingly, when the question as to the origin of knowledge arose, this was the solution proposed—an explanation which finds expression in the following counter-proposition. *Ninth Counter-proposition:* "Matter is the *cause* of our perceptive cognitions; in other words, our knowledge of material things is an *effect* proceeding from, and brought about by, material things." This opinion is the first consequence which flows from the assumption referred to.

First consequence of the assumption. Ninth counter-proposition.

4. This consequence may seem harmless enough: the next is more serious. If our knowledge, or perception, of material things be an effect produced by material things, this knowledge (the effect) must be all that we truly apprehend: the material things themselves (the cause) must elude or transcend our observation. The position is, that matter is not itself our knowledge, or any part of our knowledge, but is merely the cause of our knowledge, the originator of our perceptions: hence the perceptions alone are the objects of the mind; their cause comes not within the pale of our cognition. And thus the second consequence of the assumption that material things have an absolute existence, is the inevitable conclusion that we have no knowledge of *them*, but

Second consequence. The doctrine of representationism.

PROP. IX.

only a knowledge of their *effects*. Thus arises, and thus arose, the doctrine of a representative perception—a doctrine which, substituting for the real material universe what Berkeley calls "a false imaginary glare," is alike unsatisfactory to the philosophical, and to the unphilosophical, mind.

The earliest form of representationism. Physical Influx.

5. The earliest form of the representative hypothesis is that which is known in the history of philosophy under the name of Physical Influx (*influxus physicus*). The advocates of this scheme maintained that real things are the efficient causes of our perceptions, the word "efficient" being employed to signify that the things, by means of some positive power or inherent virtue which they possessed, were competent to transmit to the mind a knowledge of themselves. This theory held that man was cognisant, not of things themselves, but only of certain ideal copies, or intelligible transcripts, of them; and that these were caused, first, or remotely, by the operation of material things on the senses, and secondly, or proximately, by the operation of the senses on the mind; so that the doctrine of physical influx was rather an hypothesis explanatory of the way in which the senses or nervous system affected the mind, than of the way in which external objects affected the nervous system. It attempted, by invoking the causal relation, to explain the inter-

course which subsists between the body and the mind. External objects were supposed to operate on the nervous system by the transmission of some kind of influence—the nervous system was supposed to carry on the process by the transmission of certain images or representations—and thus our knowledge of external things was supposed to be brought about. The representations alone came before the mind; the things by which they were caused remained occult and unknown. PROP. IX.

6. The first important correction which this crude hypothesis sustained was at the hands of the French philosopher Des Cartes. The doctrine was, that things remotely, and the senses proximately, transmitted to the mind a knowledge of external objects. Des Cartes had an eye for the fallacy of that position. He saw that things and the senses could no more transmit cognitions to the mind than a man can transmit to a beggar a guinea which he has not got. Material things, including of course the organs of sense, have no knowledge to give to man; and therefore man cannot receive his knowledge from material things; in other words, matter cannot be the *efficient* cause of our perceptions. The explaining cause is not adequate to the production of the effect to be explained. To derive our perceptions of material things from material things, is to derive Correction of this doctrine by Des Cartes.

PROP. IX.

them from a source in which they are not contained, and which is therefore not competent to impart them. Such is the substance of the revolution effected by Des Cartes on this the standard opinion in the common schools of philosophy; and the downfall of the hypothesis of Physical Influx was the result.

Consequences of the Cartesian correction.

7. The Cartesian reform was followed by important consequences. The question now arose—What, then, is the cause of our knowledge; from whence do we derive our cognitions of external objects? If material things and the organs of sense do not originate them,—*what* originates them? Their efficient cause, answers Des Cartes, their true source, is the power and will of the Deity, who, containing within himself every perfection, is competent to produce and to impart to us perceptions, or whatever else he may be pleased to produce and to impart.

Scepticism and idealism arise.

8. This solution gave a new turn to the discussion. *Now* scepticism in regard to the existence of material things broke loose. *Now* the question emerged—What proof is there that matter exists at all? So long as material things were held to be the causes of our perceptions, a sufficient guarantee for their existence was obtained; for we can scarcely maintain that one thing is the cause of another, without conceding that the former thing exists. But now, when this doctrine is set aside as untenable—

now, when it is held that material things are not, and cannot be, the causes of our perceptions, and when it is further maintained that these are to be attributed to an entirely different origin, the question may reasonably be put—What evidence is there in support of the existence of matter? The material universe is now superfluous and otiose. It has no part to play—no purpose to fulfil. Our perceptive cognitions are brought about without its aid. All goes on as well, or better, without it. It is a mere cumberer of the ground, PROP. IX.

Ἄχρειον καὶ παράορον δέμας.

Why not say at once that it is a nonentity? Thus scepticism and idealism are the consequences, not very far removed, of the assumption that matter has an absolute existence. Commencing with the hypothesis that matter exists *absolutely*, philosophers have been led on, by the inevitable windings of the discussion, to doubt or to deny that it exists *at all*.

9. It might have been expected that these perplexities would have thrown philosophers back upon a severer examination of the data on which they were proceeding, and would have suspended their inquiry into the origin of our knowledge until the state of the fact as to its actual nature had been determined. But no such result ensued. Philosophers still busied themselves about its causes; and

The Cartesian salvo-hypothesis of "Occasional Causes." Its insufficiency.

PROP. IX.

in order to salve the scepticism which his own reform had provoked, Des Cartes came to the rescue of the material universe armed with these two arguments: first, that matter, although not the *cause*, is nevertheless the *occasion*, of our perceptions. It affords the occasions on which the Deity (the efficient cause and true source of all our knowledge) calls up in our minds the appropriate presentations. This is the Cartesian doctrine of occasional, as distinguished from efficient, causes. And secondly, he argues that the Deity, from whom can proceed no fallacious beliefs, has implanted within us a conviction of the independent existence of material things. To which arguments the answer is, that if our perceptions are originated by the Divine Power, it is more probable that they are called into being *directly*, and not through the circuitous process alleged by the Cartesians, in which certain material existences, of which we know nothing, are supposed to serve as the occasions on which the Deity is pleased to bring about in our minds certain corresponding representations; and, secondly, that it is not true that any man really believes in the existence of material things out of all relation to an intelligent mind—for, however much we may deceive ourselves on this point, it is certain that we cannot believe in that which we cannot, by any possibility, think of—and it is certain that we can think of material things only in association with our own, or some other, intelligence.

10. Mallebranche, following in the wake of Des Cartes, advocated similar opinions. He perceived, and avoided, the contradiction involved in the supposition that material things *cause* our cognitions. Our perceptions of extension, figure, and solidity (the primary qualities, as they are called), he attributed to the direct operation of the Deity. This is what he means by our "vision of all things in God," who, according to Mallebranche, is the "light of all our seeing." Our sensations of heat, colour, and so forth, he referred to certain laws of our own nature. Although material things are superfluous and otiose by the terms of this, no less than by the terms of the Cartesian, hypothesis, still Mallebranche asserts their independent existence on the authority of revelation, as Des Cartes had attempted to vindicate it on the ground of natural belief—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"—as if that statement was equivalent to the declaration that material things were invested with an absolute existence, and had a subsistency out of relation to all intelligence!

Mallebranche: His "Vision of all things in God."

11. Leibnitz, also, studiously avoided all acknowledgment of matter as the transmitting cause of our cognitions. He supposed a double series of phenomena running on simultaneously in the mind and in the body, and coincident, although absolutely independent of each other. No influence of any kind passed from mind to body, or from body to mind;

Leibnitz: His "Pre-established Harmony."

PROP. IX.

but the preconcerted arrangements of each brought about an entire concordance between the two series of changes—a concordance in which the mental representations were never at variance with the bodily impressions, although in no respect induced by them; nor the bodily movements ever at cross-purposes with the mental volitions, although in no degree dependent upon them—just as two clocks may keep time together, although no sort of influence is transmitted from the one to the other. This is the doctrine of Pre-established Harmony—a scheme which differs from that of "occasional causes" only in this respect, that by the former hypothesis the accordance of the mental and the bodily phenomena was supposed to be pre-arranged, once for all, by the Divine Power, while by the latter their harmony was supposed to be brought about by His constant and ever-renewed interposition.

Character of these hypotheses.

12. Extravagant as these hypotheses may seem, they are less so than the position which they controverted; the doctrine, namely, of physical influx, which asserted that our cognitions were caused or produced by material things operating upon our minds. They are commendable, as evidences of a reaction or struggle against that contradictory position. But they did not go to the root of the mischief: they involved no critical inquiry into the

essential structure of all cognition; and hence they failed to reduce matter *per se* to the condition of a contradiction.

Locke's explanation.

13. Locke's explanation of the origin of our knowledge differs from the opinions of his predecessors only by being more ambiguous and perfunctory. Material things exist, and give rise to our sensible ideas or perceptions, because they are fitted to do so by the Divine law and appointment. That sentence contains the substance of all that has been advanced by Locke on the subject now under consideration, and the doctrine which it expresses is obviously a mere jumble of the four hypotheses which have just been commented on. Like his predecessors, Locke was a staunch representationist. The philosopher next to be named was the first who distinctly promulgated a doctrine of intuitive perception, although he seldom gets credit for having done so.

Berkeley: His doctrine of intuitive perception.

14. Berkeley's merits and defects have been already touched upon (see p. 389). His system, with all its imperfections, was an immense improvement upon those which had preceded it. It was an inquiry, not so much into the origin as into the nature of our knowledge. It was mainly a polemic against the doctrine of representationism in all its forms. Other systems had declared that our perceptions were re-

PROP. IX.

presentative of material realities—that the perceptions alone were known—that the realities themselves were occult. Looking merely to the actual structure, and not to the supposed origin, of our cognitions, Berkeley brought the material reality itself into the immediate presence of the mind, by showing, not indeed that it was the object, but that it was *part* of the object of our cognition. The total and immediate object of the mind is, with Berkeley, the material thing itself (and no mere representation of it), with the addition, however, of some subjective and heterogeneous element. It is a synthesis of the objective and the subjective; the thing *plus* the sense (sight or touch, &c.), a unit indivisible *by us* at least. Berkeley thus accomplished the very task which, fifty or sixty years afterwards, Reid laboured at in vain. He taught a doctrine of intuitive, as distinguished from a doctrine of representative, perception; and he taught it on the only grounds on which such a doctrine can be maintained.

His fundamental defect.

15. Berkeley's system, however, was invalidated by a fundamental weakness, which was this, that it was rather an exposition of the contingent structure of *our* knowledge, than an exposition of the necessary structure of *all* knowledge. As has been stated elsewhere, he does not sufficiently distinguish the necessary from the contingent laws of cognition, or distinctly lay down the former as binding on intelli-

gence universally. He saw that every object of *our* cognition must contain and present a subjective element. But he neither declared what that element was, nor did he clearly show that all intelligence was necessarily subject to the same law, and that every object of *all* cognition must involve a subjective or non-material ingredient. Hence he failed to reduce matter *per se* to the condition of a contradiction; because if matter can be known *per se* by any possible intelligence—if it can, in any circumstances, be apprehended without some subjective ingredient being apprehended along with it—we are not entitled to set it down as the contradictory in itself. To fix it as this, it must be fixed as the absolutely and necessarily and universally unknowable. Berkeley's system scarcely rises to this position. He has nowhere made out clearly that matter *per se* is the contradictory to *all* intelligence, although he may have shown with sufficient distinctness that it is the contradictory to *our* intelligence. But if matter *per se* is not the contradictory to all intelligence, it may possibly exist—exist with a true and absolute existence. But if matter *per se* can exist absolutely, Berkeley's ontology breaks down—for his conclusion is that the subject and the object *together*, the synthesis of mind and the universe, is what alone truly and absolutely exists, or can exist. PROP. IX.

16. Reid mistook entirely the scope of the Ber-

PROP. IX.

Reid. His misunderstanding of Berkeley.

kelcian speculations. He actually supposed Berkeley to have been a representationist, and that the only difference between him and the ordinary disciples of this school, was, that while *they* admitted the existence of matter, *he* denied it, and was what is vulgarly termed an idealist. Berkeley is supposed by Reid to have agreed with the representationists in holding that mere ideas or perceptions were the immediate objects of the mind; but to have differed from them in throwing overboard the occult material realities which these ideas were supposed to represent. This interpretation of Berkeleianism is altogether erroneous. Instead of exploding the material reality, Berkeley, as has been said, brought it face to face with the mind, by showing that it was a *part*, although never the *whole*, of the object of our cognition; and this, it is submitted, is the only tenable or intelligible ground on which the doctrine of intuitive perception can be placed. This position, however, was totally misconceived by Dr Reid; and hence he has done very gross, although unintentional, injustice to the philosophical opinions of his predecessor.

Reid failed to establish a doctrine of intuitive perception.

17. In regard to Dr Reid's own doctrine of intuitive perception and his supposed refutation of representationism, it must not be disguised that both of them are complete failures. His ultimate object was to vindicate the absolute existence of the material

universe, which, having been rendered problematical by the Cartesian speculations, had been denied on much better grounds by the dialectic of Berkeley—these grounds being, that we could only know it *cum alio*, and therefore could neither conceive nor believe in it *per se*. To accomplish this end, Reid set on foot a doctrine of intuitive perception, in which he endeavoured to show that material realities stand face to face with the mind, *without anything more* standing there along with them. This at least must be understood to have been his implied, if not his express, position; for what kind of logic would there be in the argument—material things are known to exist, *not* by themselves, but only in connection with something else, *therefore* they exist by themselves, or out of connection with everything else. Unless, then, we are to charge Dr Reid with this monstrous *non-sequitur*, we must suppose him to have held that we apprehend material things without apprehending anything else at the same time. If that position could be made good, it would at once establish both the independent existence of matter, and a doctrine of intuitive perception. But the position is one which runs counter to every law of human knowledge, both contingent and necessary. Whenever we know material things, we are cognisant of our own senses (sight or touch, &c.) as well: it thus runs counter to the contingent laws. Again, whenever we know material things, we know ourselves

PROP. IX.

PROP. IX.

as well: it thus runs counter to the necessary laws. This doctrine of intuitive perception, therefore, is a theory which sets at defiance every law of intelligence, and which consequently fails to overtake either of the aims which its author had in view.

His character as a philosopher.

18. But Dr Reid, honest man, must not be dealt with too severely. With vastly good intentions, and very excellent abilities for everything except philosophy, he had no speculative genius whatever —positively an anti-speculative turn of mind, which, with a mixture of shrewdness and *naïveté* altogether incomparable, he was pleased to term "common sense;" thereby proposing as arbiter in the controversies in which he was engaged, an authority which the learned could not well decline, and which the vulgar would very readily defer to. There was good policy in this appeal. The standard of the exact reason did not quite suit him, neither was he willing to be immortalised as the advocate of mere vulgar prejudices; so that he caught adroitly at this middle term, whereby he was enabled, when reason failed him, to take shelter under popular opinion; and when popular opinion went against him, to appeal to the higher evidence of reason. Without renouncing scientific precision when it could be attained, he made friends of the mammon of unphilosophy. What chance had a writer like David Hume, with only one string to *his* bow, against a man who thus

avowed his determination to avail himself, as occasion might require, of the plausibilities of uncritical thinking, and of the refinements of logical reflection? This amphibious method, however, had its disadvantages. At home in the submarine abysses of popular opinion, Dr Reid, in the higher regions of philosophy, was as helpless as a whale in a field of clover. He was out of his proper element. He blamed the atmosphere: the fault lay in his own lungs. Through the gills of ordinary thinking he expected to transpire the pure ether of speculation, and it nearly choked him. His fate ought to be a warning to all men, that in philosophy we cannot serve two mistresses. Our ordinary moods, our habitual opinions, our natural prejudices, are not compatible with the verdicts of our speculative reason. PROP. IX.

19. The truth is, that Dr Reid mistook, or rather reversed, the vocation of philosophy. He supposed that the business of this discipline was, not to correct, but to confirm the contradictory inadvertencies of natural thinking. Accordingly, the main tendency of his labours was to organise the irrational, and to make error systematic. But even in this attempt he has only partially succeeded. His opinions are even more confused than they are fallacious, more incoherent than they are erroneous; and no amount of expositorial ingenuity has ever succeeded in conferring on his doctrines even the lowest degree of

He mistook the vocation of philosophy.

PROP. IX.

scientific intelligibility. His claim to take rank *par excellence*, as *the* champion of common sense, is preposterous, if by common sense anything more be meant than vulgar opinion. When the cause of philosophy is fairly and fully pled at the bar of *genuine* common sense, it is conceived that a decision will be given by that tribunal in favour of the necessary truths of reason, and not in favour of the antagonist verdicts of the popular and unreflective understanding which Dr Reid took under his protection. Oh, Catholic Reason of mankind, surely thou art not the real, but only the reputed, mother of this anti-philosophical philosophy: *thy* children, I take it, are rather Plato's Demigods and Spinoza's Titans.

Kant. "Innate ideas."

20. At this place, and in special reference to the philosopher (Kant) whose opinions have next to be considered, it will be necessary to introduce a short account of the doctrine of "innate ideas," viewed both in itself and in its history. This theory has been generally, if not universally, misunderstood; and, as has usually happened in philosophical controversies, its supporters and its impugners have been both equally at fault. Before commenting on the false, it will be proper to give the true, version of this celebrated opinion—and before showing in what sense it is wrong and untenable, to show in what sense it is tenable and right.

PROP. IX.

Right interpretation of this doctrine.

21. Rightly understood, the doctrine of innate ideas is merely another form of expression for the initial principle (Prop. I.) of these Institutes. From an accurate observation of *the fact* in regard to knowledge, we learn that every cognition, or perception, or idea, consists, and must consist, of two heterogeneous parts, elements, or factors,—one of which is contributed from within—belongs to the mind itself, and hence is said to be *innate;* the other of which is contributed from without, and hence may be said to be *extranate* (if such a word may be used), or of foreign extraction. To render this somewhat abstract statement perfectly intelligible and convincing, all that we have to do is to translate it into the concrete; and to affirm, that whenever a man apprehends an external thing (this is the foreign, the extranate ingredient in the total cognition), he must apprehend *himself* also (this is the innate, or home ingredient in the total cognition); and conversely, that whenever a man apprehends *himself* (the innate element), he must always apprehend something else, be it a thing or a thought, or a feeling (the foreign element) as well. So that every cognition, or idea, or perception, necessarily consists of two parts, the one of which is native to the mind, and is often denominated *a priori*—to indicate that it is the essential or grounding element; and the other of which is extraneous to the mind, and is frequently termed *a posteriori*, to signify that it is

PROP. IX.

the changeable, or accidental, or accruing element. It is thus obvious that the doctrine of innate ideas, when properly understood, is merely another form of the doctrine advanced in the first proposition of the epistemology; and, further, that it is merely another phasis of the doctrine of "the universal and the particular" propounded in the sixth proposition of that same section. The *me* is the innate, or *a priori*, or universal, part of every cognition, perception, or idea: things, or thoughts, or states of mind whatsoever, (the not-me) are the extranate, *a posteriori*, or particular part of every cognition, perception, or idea.

The circumstance to be particularly attended to in considering this doctrine.

22. The circumstance, then, above all others, to be attended to in coming to a right comprehension of this theory is, that the word "innate" is never to be understood in reference to ideas, but only in reference to a part of every idea, and that neither is the word "foreign, or acquired, or extraneous," ever to be understood in reference to ideas, but only in reference to a part of every idea. There are thus no innate ideas, and no extranate ideas; but every idea or cognition has an element which is innate, and an element which is not so—every cognition, in short, is both innate and extranate—is a synthesis constituted by an *a priori* part and an *a posteriori* part. This consideration, of course, fixes these elements (when considered apart from each other), as necessarily unknowable and contradictory.

The misconception to be particularly guarded against.

23. Hence the misconception, above all others to be avoided, if we would form a correct notion—indeed, any notion at all of this theory—is the supposition that some (one class) of our cognitions or ideas are innate; and that others (another class) are originated from without; in other words, the blunder most particularly to be guarded against, is the opinion that the two factors (original and derivative) of our cognitions are themselves cognitions, or can be themselves *whole* ideas. If *this* were the theory it would indeed be a portentous, purposeless, and unintelligible chimera.

This misconception has never been guarded against by any philosopher.

24. Strange to say, no philosopher that can be named has avoided this error. They have agreed, to a man, in thinking that the word "innate" referred to a particular *class* of our ideas—and not to a *part* of each of our ideas; and that the word "foreign" or "derived" or "extraneous," referred to another *class* of our ideas, and not to a *part* of each of them. In short, they have fallen into the mistake already explained at considerable length under the Sixth Proposition of the Epistemology, Obs. 13–17. The advocates, equally with the opponents of the theory, have misapprehended the nature of the analysis on which it proceeded. They have mistaken elements for kinds. Those who maintained the doctrine, supposed that one kind or class of our ideas had its origin from within the mind, and that another kind

PROP. IX.

or class of our ideas had its origin from without; while their opponents, never doubting that *this* was the point properly at issue, denied that any of our ideas were innate, and attributed the whole of them to an extraneous origin. Accordingly, the controversy concerning innate ideas has been one in which neither of the parties engaged had any conception of the question properly under litigation.

Hence the ineptitude of the controversy.

25. This fundamental mistake has beset the controversy during every period of its history. Des Cartes, Mallebranche, and Leibnitz were of opinion that some of our ideas came to us from without, and that others were generated from within; that one class of our cognitions was innate, or original; that another class was factitious, or acquired. Over the theory thus irrationally propounded, Locke obtained an easy victory. Had the controversy been put upon the right footing—had the true question been raised, Is there an innate *part* and an extraneous *part* in every one of our cognitions?—and had Locke answered in the negative, and maintained that each of our cognitions embraced *only one* element—namely, the extraneous, or sensible part,—in that case his position would have been untenable, because it would have been equivalent to the assertion that both factors (inner and outer) were not essential to the formation of all knowledge, and that an idea could subsist with one of its necessary con-

stituents withdrawn. But, as against Des Cartes, Mallebranche, and Leibnitz, who held that some of our ideas are from without, and others from within, his refutation was triumphant. If any one cognition has its origin *wholly* from without, we may safely generalise that fact, and assert that the whole of our knowledge is due to an external source. The postulation of an internal element is permissible only because the external element by itself (the mere objective) is no cognition at all, but is pure nonsense, just as the postulation of an external element is permissible only because the internal element by itself (the mere subjective, the indeterminate *me*) is no cognition at all, but is pure nonsense. This, however, was not the acceptation in which the doctrine of innate ideas was understood at the time when Locke wrote, and therefore he is less to be blamed for having impugned, than his opponents are for having advanced, so inept and irrelevant an hypothesis.

26. Locke's refutation of the doctrine, as it was at that time understood, was so complete, that little or nothing was heard of "innate ideas" for many years afterwards. This speculation lay dormant during the ascendancy of sensualism, or the scheme which derives all our knowledge from without, until towards the close of the eighteenth century, when it was again revived under the auspices of the German

In this controversy Kant is as much at fault as his predecessors.

PROP. IX.

philosopher Kant. And on what footing does Kant place the resuscitated opinion? Precisely on the same footing as before. He understands, or rather misunderstands, the doctrine, just as its former upholders had misunderstood it. He mistakes elements for kinds. In explaining the origin of our knowledge, he does not refer one part of each of our cognitions to the mind itself, and another part of each of our cognitions to some foreign source; but he refers some of our cognitions entirely to the one source, and some of them entirely to the other. It is true that Kant is ambiguous, and appears at times as if he had got hold of the right doctrine, namely, that the words *a priori*, or *native*, on the one hand, and *a posteriori*, or *empirical*, on the other, apply only to the elements of our ideas, and not to our ideas themselves. But he more frequently repeats the old error, characterising some of our cognitions as *a priori*, or original, and others as empirical or acquired. At any rate, his misconception of the true doctrine is proved by the consideration that he nowhere proclaims that the empirical element of cognition (that supplied by the senses) is nonsensical and contradictory, when divorced from the element which is supplied by the mind; and conversely, that the latter element is nonsensical and contradictory, unless when associated with some empirical or extraneous ingredient. Not having made this announcement, Kant must be held to have missed the true theory,

and to have taught a doctrine of innate ideas fully as untenable and inept as any propounded by his predecessors. He regards matter *per se* as the cause of our sensible cognitions; and altogether he cannot be complimented on having thrown any new light on the origin of knowledge, or on having extricated the controversy from the confusion into which it had run. PROP. IX.

27. The errors and perplexities which have been passed under review might have been avoided, had philosophers addressed themselves assiduously to the consideration of knowledge as it actually is, and eschewed at the outset all inquiry into its origin. This is the method which these Institutes have endeavoured uniformly to pursue throughout the first section of the science; and to its observance is to be attributed any credit which they may obtain for having steered clear of the shoals and whirlpools which have shipwrecked all previous systems. The following recapitulation may serve as a memorandum of some of the leading points of the system. How this system of Institutes avoids these errors.

28. *First*, and generally, this system obtains a great advantage in starting from no hypothesis, either affirmative or negative, in regard to the absolute existence of the material universe. The affirmative assumption has disconcerted every attempt which has hitherto been made to propound a reasoned *First:* it starts from no hypothesis.

PROP. IX.

theory of knowing; and the negative assumption is, of course, equally unwarrantable. The system, therefore, indulges, at the outset, in no opinion in regard to independent material existence either *pro* or *con;* it leaves that point to be determined by the result of the inquiry into the actual character and constitution of knowledge. To this inquiry it adheres closely until it has exhausted all its details, and, tracking the knowable through all the disguises and transformations which it can assume, has found that, under all its metamorphoses, it is, at bottom and in the last resort, essentially *the same*—the same knowable in all essential respects, susceptible though it be of infinite varieties in all its accidental features.

Secondly: it finds that all cognition consists of two elements.

29. *Secondly*, a rigorous inquisition into the structure of the known and knowable, shows us that *oneself* must always be a part of everything that is known or knowable. The two constituents, therefore, of every cognition which any intelligence can entertain, are itself and—whatever else the other element may be; for this element, being indefinite and inexhaustible, cannot be more specially condescended upon.

Thirdly: it finds that each element is no cognition, but only a *half* or part-cognition.

30. *Thirdly*, this analysis necessarily reduces to a mere part of cognition everything which is known along with that definite part called self; because, if this definite element must be known (as it must)

along with whatever is known, that which is known along with it cannot be a known or knowable whole; but only a known and knowable part. Thus many things—indeed, everything—which we heretofore regarded as the objects of cognition, turn out, on examination, to be only *part-objects* of cognition.

31. *Fourthly.* This analysis further reduces the material universe, whether considered in the aggregate or in detail, to a mere part or element of cognition. It can be known only along with the other element. *The* cognition is always the material universe (or a portion of it), *plus* the mind or person contemplating it. This synthesis is not merely the only known, but the only knowable.

Fourthly: it finds that matter is only a *half* cognition.

32. *Fifthly.* *Now*, a doctrine of intuitive perception can be established on reasonable grounds; *now* the downfall of representationism is insured. A doctrine of intuitive perception arises, indeed, of its own accord, out of the data which have been laid down. Matter, or the external thing, is just as much the immediate object of a man's mind as he himself is the immediate object of his mind, because it is part and parcel of the total presentation which is before him. Thus the material universe is neither representative of something else, nor is it represented by anything else. It is representative of nothing except itself; and we apprehend it intuitively—the consideration being

Fifthly: it establishes "intuitive," and overthrows "representative," perception.

PROP. IX.

borne in mind that we always do and must apprehend ourselves along with it.

Sixthly: it steers clear of materialism.

33. *Sixthly.* This system steers clear of materialism, or the doctrine which holds that matter has an absolute existence—is an independent and completed entity. The same stroke which reduces matter to a mere element of cognition, reduces matter *per se* (that is, matter dissociated from the other element of cognition) to the predicament of a contradiction. But the contradictory can have no true or absolute existence; and thus materialism is annihilated. Its whole strength is founded on the assumption that material objects are *completed* objects of cognition; in other words, that they can be known without anything else being known along with them. This assumption has been found to be false. The materialist is asked *where* is the matter *per se* of which you speak? *There* it is, said Dr Johnson, kicking against a stone. But, good Doctor, that is not matter *per se*,—that is matter *cum alio*; and this, we need scarcely say, is what no man ever doubted or denied the existence of.

Seventhly: it steers clear of spurious idealism.

34. *Seventhly.* This system steers clear of spurious idealism, or the doctrine which holds that matter, in the supposed withdrawal of all intelligence, is a nonentity. Matter is an element, or half-object of cognition. The withdrawal therefore of the other

element or half-object (the ego), cannot have the effect of reducing matter to a nonentity; first, because the *whole* object of cognition is matter-*plus*-me, and only *half* of it has been supposed to be withdrawn; and, secondly, because there are no nonentities any more than there are entities out of relation to some *me* or mind. Knowable nonentity is always nonentity *plus* me, just as much as knowable entity is always entity *plus* me. So that to suppose matter to become a nonentity in the supposed withdrawal or annihilation of (every) me, would be to suppose it still in connection with the very factor which we profess to have withdrawn. Accordingly the conclusion is, first, *if* we can suppose all intelligence at an end, matter, although it would cease to be an entity, would not become a nonentity. It would become the contradictory—it would be neither nothing nor anything. And secondly, we can *not* conceive all intelligence at an end, because we *must* conceive, under any circumstances, either that something exists or that nothing exists. But neither the existence nor the non-existence of things is conceivable out of relation to an intelligence—and therefore the highest and most binding law of all reason is, that in no circumstances can a supreme mind be conceived to be abstracted from the universe. The system which inculcates these truths may be termed a philosophy of real-idealism. It loses hold of nothing which the unreflective mind considers to be real;

PROP. IX.

PROP. IX.

but seizing on the material universe, and combining it inseparably with an additional element, it absorbs it in a new product, which it gives out as the only true and substantial universe—the only universe which any intellect can think of without running into a contradiction.

35. *Eighthly.* By these considerations this system is absolved from all obligation to point out the causes or origin of cognition. The truths which it has reached render that question absurd. It is unanswerable, because it is unaskable. The question is, What are the conceivable causes in existence which generate knowledge? And the answer is, That no existence at all can be conceived by any intelligence anterior to, and aloof from, knowledge. Knowledge of existence—the apprehension of oneself and other things—is alone true existence. This is itself the First, the Bottom, the Origin—and this is what all intelligence is prevented by the laws of all reason from ever getting beyond or below. To inquire what this proceeds from, is as inept as to ask what is the Beginning of the Beginning. All the explanations which can be proposed can find their data only by presupposing the very knowledge whose genesis they are professing to explain. In thinking of things as antecedent to all knowledge, some *me* or mind must always be thought of along with them; and in thinking of some *me* or mind as antecedent to all

Eighthly: It is under no obligation to explain the origin of knowledge, because knowledge itself is *the Beginning.*

knowledge, some things or determinations must always be thought of along with it. But the conception of this synthesis is itself the conception of knowledge; so that we are compelled to assume as the ground of our explanation the very thing (knowledge) which that ground had been brought forward to explain.

The synthesis of ego and non-ego is original, and not factitious or secondary.

36. And finally, it must be borne in mind that although all cognition has been characterised by this system as a fusion or synthesis of two contradictories (the ego and non-ego)—that is, of two elements which, out of relation to each other, are necessarily unknowable—this does not mean that the synthesis is brought about by the union of two elements, which existed in a state of analysis *previous* to the formation of the synthesis. The synthesis is the primary or original; the analysis is the secondary or posterior. The contradictory elements are found by an analysis of the synthesis, but the synthesis is not generated by putting together the parts obtained by the analysis, because these parts can be conceived only in relation to each other, or as *already* put together.

PROPOSITION X.

WHAT ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE IS.

Absolute Existence is the synthesis of the subject and object—the union of the universal and the particular—the concretion of the ego and non-ego; in other words, the only true, and real, and independent Existences are minds-together-with-that-which-they-apprehend.

DEMONSTRATION.

ABSOLUTE Existence is either that which we know or that which we are ignorant of, (Prop. V., Ontology). If Absolute Existence is that which we know, it must be the synthesis of subject and object —the union of the universal and the particular, the concretion of the ego and the non-ego, because this, and this alone, is knowable, (Props. I. II. VI. IX., Epistemology). This synthesis alone is the con-

ceivable, (Prop. XIII., Epistemology). This, and this alone, is the substantial and absolute in cognition, (Props. XVII. XXI., Epistemology.) Again, if Absolute Existence is that which we are ignorant of, it must equally be the synthesis of subject and object, the union of the universal and the particular, the concretion of the ego and the non-ego, because this, and this alone, is what we can be ignorant of (Prop. VIII., Agnoiology.) Therefore, whichever alternative be adopted, the result is the same. Whether we claim a knowledge, or profess an ignorance, of the Absolutely Existent, the conclusion is inevitably forced upon us that the Absolutely Existent is the synthesis of the subject and object—the union of the universal and the particular—the concretion of the ego and non-ego; in other words, that the only existences to which true, and real, and independent Being can be ascribed are minds-together-with-that-which-they-apprehend. PROP. X.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. This proposition solves the problem of ontology. It demonstrates what is—what alone absolutely exists: and thus the end or aim which it was the business and duty of this section of the science to accomplish, has been overtaken.—(See Introduction, § 54). A predicate declaratory of its character has been affixed to Absolute Existence, and this This proposition solves the problem of ontology.

PROP. X.

predicate applies to it equally whether we are cognisant of it, or are ignorant of it. If we are cognisant of Absolute Existence, it must be object *plus* subject, because this, and this alone, is what any intelligence can know. If we are ignorant of Absolute Existence, it must be still object *plus* subject, because we can be ignorant only of what can be known—and object *plus* subject is what alone can be known. Thus the concluding truth of the ontology is demonstratively established, and comes out all the same whether we claim a knowledge, or avow an ignorance, of that which truly exists. Thus the ultimate end of the system is compassed,—compassed by legitimate means,—and its crowning pledge triumphantly redeemed.—(See Introduction, § 60).

It answers the question: What is Truth?

2. The solution of the ontological problem affords, moreover, an answer to the ultimate question of philosophy—What is Truth?—(See Introduction, § 60). Whatever absolutely is, is true. The question, therefore, is—But what absolutely is? And the answer, as now declared, is, that object *plus* subject is what absolutely is—that this, and this alone, truly and really exists. This synthesis, accordingly, is THE TRUTH: the Ground—below which there is neither anything nor nothing.

3. The reader who has followed the system up to this point, should now be at no loss to understand

PROP. X.

how the synthesis of the particular and the universal is alone entitled to the name of "the Existent." This doctrine, or at least an approximation to it, was the burthen of the philosophy of antiquity—the truth mainly insisted on by the early Greek speculators. But the doctrine at that time, and as *they* expounded it, was of necessity unintelligible. None of them knew, or at any rate none of them *said*, what the universal was which entered into the synthesis of Existence. None of them named it. Hence their statement made no impression on the popular mind, and it has remained an enigma to all succeeding generations. No one could understand why the particular (that is, material things by themselves) were denied to be truly existent. But these Institutes have now distinctly shown *what* this universal is, and the darkness is dissipated—the ancient doctrine becomes luminous. The Institutes have shown that this universal is *oneself:* oneself, first, inasmuch as this element must form a part of everything which any intelligence can know, (Props. I. II., Epistemology); oneself, secondly, inasmuch as this element must form a part of everything which any intelligence can conceive, (Props. XII. XIII., Epistemology); oneself, thirdly, inasmuch as this element must form a part of everything which any intelligence can be ignorant of, (Prop. VIII., Agnoiology). These points having been demonstratively established, it is conceived that people should have now

All Existence is the synthesis of the universal and the particular.

PROP. X.

no difficulty in understanding how oneself or the ego must also form a part of every thing which really and truly *exists*, and consequently how the Absolutely Existent should in all cases be the union of the universal and the particular; and further, how Absolute Existence cannot be accorded to the particular—that is, to mere material things—inasmuch as these, by themselves, are the contradictory to all knowledge, and likewise the contradictory to all ignorance; and, therefore, cannot have true Being ascribed to them, unless we are prepared to maintain that the nonsensical, or that which is neither nothing or anything, is the truly and absolutely existent.

Thus the equation of the Known and the Existent has been proved.

4. It was formerly remarked (p. 163), that the equation or coincidence of the known and the existent is the ultimate conclusion which philosophy has to demonstrate. This demonstration has been supplied, and the conclusion has been reasoned out from the bottom. The universal and the particular (ego and non-ego) *in cognition* are also in all essential respects the universal and the particular *in existence;* or, expressed more popularly, the conclusion is that every true and absolute existence is a consciousness-together-with-its-contents, whatever these contents may be. Thus Knowing and Being are shown to be built up out of the same elements; and thus the laws of cognition are demonstrated to be in harmony with the laws of existence; and thus psy-

chology, the whole spirit of whose teaching is to inculcate the frightful doctrine that there is no parallelism between them, is overthrown.—(See p. 207). PROP. X.

5. It has now, moreover, been shown, by means of strict demonstration, that the substantial and absolute in existence equates, *in essentialibus*, with the substantial and absolute in cognition. The substantial and absolute in cognition was found to be the synthesis of the ego and non-ego—of the subject and object—of the universal and the particular. This same synthesis was found to be the substantial and absolute in ignorance, and hence it follows that this same synthesis is the substantial and Absolute in Existence; because the substantial and absolute in existence must be either that which we know or that which we are ignorant of. And thus we obtain further proof and corroboration of the coincidence of the Known and the Existent. The ego is the *summum genus* of existence, no less than of cognition.—(See p. 201 and p. 207). The coincidence of The Absolute in Existence with the absolute in Cognition has also been proved.

6. To remove any ground of misapprehension, it is necessary, at this place, to direct attention to the words "in essentialibus" in the preceding paragraph. The Absolute, as known *by us*, has been proved to be identical with the existing Absolute, not in all respects *accidental* as well as essential, but only in all *essential* respects: in other words, Attention called to restriction in foregoing paragraph.

PROP. X.

the Absolute in existence cannot be declared to coincide exactly with the Absolute in *our* cognition, but only with the absolute in *all* cognition: or to express the restriction differently—The ontology gives out as the existing Absolute the result which is obtained from the study of the necessary laws of knowledge *only*, and not the result which is obtained from the study of *both* the necessary and the contingent laws of knowledge, (see p. 383-4). An illustration, or concrete example, will enable the reader to understand clearly this somewhat abstract statement.

Illustration of restriction —What the ontology gives out as alone Absolute Existence.

7. The absolutely Existent which each of us is individually cognisant of, is—himself-apprehending-things-*by-the-senses*. A man cannot be cognisant of himself merely, or of things merely, or of senses merely. He, therefore, cannot be cognisant of these three as existences, but only as factors or elements of existence; and the only true and absolute existence which he can know is, as has been said, their synthesis—to wit, himself-apprehending-things-*by-the-senses*. Now the circumstance to be particularly attended to is, that the part of the synthesis here printed in italics is contingent in its character. Our five senses are the accidental part of the absolute in *our* cognition: they are not a necessary part of the Absolute in *all* cognition, and therefore they are not a necessary part of every absolute existence. Other

intelligences may be cognisant of themselves-appre-hending-things-*in-other-ways-than-we-do*. In which case *their* Absolute, both in cognition and existence, would be different from ours, in its *accidentals*, but not in its *essentials*. So that all that the ontology professes to have proved in regard to absolute existence is, that every Absolute Existence must consist of the two terms—ego and non-ego—subject and object—universal and particular; in other words, of a self, and something or other (be it what it may) in union with a self.

8. It was formerly remarked (see p. 270) that it would be necessary in the ontology to qualify the assertion that "Plato's intelligible world was our sensible world." The foregoing observations may enable the reader to understand to what extent that assertion has to be qualified. Plato's intelligible world is our sensible world, in so far as all the essential elements both of cognition and of existence are concerned; but not in so far as the contingent elements, either of cognition or of existence, are concerned: in other words, Plato's intelligible world is our sensible world to this extent, that it is that which *must* embrace a subjective and an objective factor—an ego and a non-ego—but not to this extent that it is that into whose constitution (whether considered as known or as existent) such senses as ours must of necessity enter. Hence what we term the sensible

This paragraph qualifies an assertion made in p. 270.

PROP. X.

world is the only intelligible or truly existing world in so far as it consists of ourselves and things, but it is not the only intelligible and truly existing world in so far as the senses are embraced in this synthesis, for these are the contingent and (possibly) variable conditions of the known; and are consequently the contingent and (possibly) variable conditions of the existent. The other terms (ego and non-ego) *must* co-exist wherever there is either knowledge or existence. Hence it may be truly said that every existence is a *co*-existence; and that to attempt, as all psychology does, to cut down this co-existent into two separate existences (mind and its objects), is to aim at the establishment of contradiction in the place of knowledge, and of nonsense in the place of existence.

In what sense we know, and in what sense we are ignorant of, Absolute Existence.

9. A word must here be added to explain in what sense, and to what extent, we are cognisant of absolute existence, and in what sense, and to what extent, we are ignorant of the same. Every man is cognisant of absolute existence when he knows—himself and the objects by which he is surrounded, or the thoughts or feelings by which he is visited; every man is ignorant (in the strict sense of having no experience) of all absolute existence except this—his own individual case. But a man is not ignorant of all absolute existences except himself and his own presentations, in the sense of having no conception of them. He can conceive them as conceivable, that

is to say, as non-contradictory. He has given to him, in his own case, the type or pattern by means of which he can conceive other cases of absolute existence. Hence he can affirm, with the fullest assurance, that he is surrounded by Absolute Existences constituted like himself, although it is impossible that he can ever know them as they know themselves, or as he knows himself. He will find, however, that every attempt to construe to his mind an absolute and real existence which is *not* a synthesis of subject and object, resolves itself into a contradiction, and precipitates him into the utterly inconceivable. But although absolute existences are innumerable — although every example of objects *plus* a subject is a case of Absolute Existence—there is, nevertheless, only *one* Absolute Existence which is strictly *necessary*, as the next and concluding proposition of the ontology will show. PROP. X.

10. *Tenth Counter-proposition.*—"Absolute Existence is not the synthesis of the subject and object, &c., —in other words, minds-together-with-that-which-they-apprehend are not the only true and absolute existences—but that which the mind apprehends may exist absolutely, and out of all relation to a mind; while the mind may exist absolutely, and out of all relation to any thing (or thought) apprehended." This counter-proposition, which attributes absolute existence to the contradictory, has been already sufficiently controverted. Tenth counter-proposition.

PROPOSITION XI.

WHAT ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE IS NECESSARY.

All absolute existences are contingent *except one;* in other words, there is One, but only one, Absolute Existence which is strictly *necessary;* and that existence is a supreme, and infinite, and everlasting Mind in synthesis with all things.

DEMONSTRATION.

To save the universe from presenting a contradiction to all reason, intelligence must be postulated in connection with it; because everything except the synthesis of subject and object is contradictory, is that of which there can be no knowledge (Props. I. II., Epistemology), and no ignorance (Prop. VIII., Agnoiology). But *more* than *one* intelligence does not require to be postulated; because the universe is rescued from contradiction as effectually by the

supposition of one intelligence in connection with it, as by the supposition of ten million, and reason never postulates more than is necessary. Therefore all absolute existences are contingent except one; in other words, there is One, but only one, Absolute Existence which is strictly *necessary;* and that existence is a supreme, and infinite, and eternal Mind in synthesis with all things. PROP. XI.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

1. In this proposition a distinction is taken between contingent absolute existences (for example, human beings *together with* what they apprehend) and the One Absolute Existence which is necessary. All absolute existences except one are contingent. This is proved by the consideration that there was a time when the world was without man; and by the consideration that in other worlds there may be no intelligences at all. This is intelligible to reason. But in the judgment of reason there never can have been a time when the universe was without God. *That* is unintelligible to reason; because time is not time, but is nonsense, without a mind; space is not space, but is nonsense, without a mind; all objects are not objects, but are nonsense, without a mind; in short, the whole universe is neither anything nor nothing, but is the sheer contradictory, without a mind. And therefore, inasmuch as we cannot help

Distinction taken in this prop. Ontological proof of Deity.

PROP. XL

thinking that there was a time before man existed, and that there was space before man existed, and that the universe was something or other before man existed; so neither can we not help thinking, that before man existed, a supreme and eternal intelligence existed, in synthesis with all things. In the estimation of natural thinking, the universe by itself is not the contradictory; in our ordinary moods we suppose it capable of subsisting by itself. Hence, in our ordinary moods, we see no *necessity* why a supreme intelligence should be postulated in connection with it. But speculation shows us that the universe, by itself, is the contradictory; that it is incapable of self-subsistency, that it can exist only *cum alio*, that all true and cogitable and non-contradictory existence is a synthesis of the subjective and the objective; and *then* we are compelled, by the most stringent necessity of thinking, to conceive a supreme intelligence as the ground and essence of the Universal Whole. Thus the postulation of the Deity is not only permissible, it is unavoidable. Every mind thinks, and *must* think of God (however little conscious it may be of the operation which it is performing), whenever it thinks of anything as lying beyond all human observation, or as subsisting in the absence or annihilation of all finite intelligences.

2. To this conclusion, which is the crowning truth of the ontology, the research has been led, not by

any purpose aforethought, but simply by the winding current of the speculative reason, to whose guidance it had implicitly surrendered itself. That current has carried the system, *nolens volens*, to the issue which it has reached. It started with no intention of establishing this conclusion, or any conclusion which was not *forced* upon it by the insuperable necessities of thought. It has found what it did not seek; and it is conceived that this theistic conclusion is all the more to be depended upon on that very account, inasmuch as the desire or intention to reach a particular inference is almost sure to warp in favour of that inference the reasoning by which it is supported. Here metaphysics stop; here ontology is merged in Theology. Philosophy has accomplished her final work; she has reached by strict demonstration the central law of all reason (the necessity, namely, of thinking an infinite and eternal Ego in synthesis with all things); and that law she lays down as the basis of all religion.

PROP. XI.

The system is *forced* to this conclusion.

3. *Eleventh Counter-proposition.*—"The universe by itself, or out of relation to all intelligence, is, or may be, a necessary existence." This counter-proposition, which is the ground of all atheism, is effectually subverted by the proposition which is the ground of all Theism; but the atheistic position could not have been *demonstratively* turned, had the universe by itself (objects *per se*) not been re-

Eleventh counter-proposition.

PROP. XI.

duced to the predicament of the contradictory—hence the infinite importance of the dialectical operation by which that reduction is effected.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

The main question is—how has the system redeemed its pledges?

1. In proceeding to offer a short summary of these Institutes, with the view of aiding the impartial reader to form an estimate of their scope, character, and results, the main question for consideration is, how far have they redeemed the pledges held out at their commencement,—how far have they fulfilled the requirements by which they professed themselves bound,—how far have they executed the work which they took in hand? For it is but reasonable that a science should be tested only in reference to the end which it proposes, and to the means which it employs, and not in reference to the vague expectations or inconsiderate demands of its students. A man may desire to learn astronomy from the study of anatomy; but if he does so, he cannot fail to be disappointed. So, if a man expects to derive from metaphysics information which this science does not profess to impart, the mistake will lie with the man, and not with the science. This system, then, claims the privilege of being tried only by the standard which itself has set up, and of being called to an account only for the work which it undertook to execute.

2. In the first place, it is submitted that these Institutes have complied with the two general requisitions set forth in the Introduction (§ 2), as obligatory on every system which lays claim to the title of philosophy. They are reasoned, and they are true. They are reasoned, inasmuch as their conclusions follow necessarily and inevitably from their initial principle; and they are true, inasmuch as their initial principle is a necessary truth or law of reason.

It is submitted that the system is both reasoned and true.

3. But in the second place, the point most particularly to be considered, as affecting the substance of the inquiry, is this—has the system *done* the work which it undertook to do? It undertook to correct the contradictory inadvertencies incident to popular opinion, and the deliberate errors prevalent in psychological science; and in the room of these inadvertencies and errors to substitute necessary ideas, or unquestionable truths of reason. This was declared to be the business, and the only business, of philosophy, (see Introduction, § § 44, 45). How, then, has the system acquitted itself in respect to that engagement?

The chief consideration to be looked to in estimating the system.

4. This question will be best answered if we take a survey of the system rather in its negative or polemical, than in its positive or constructive, character. The object of philosophy is twofold—to correct error, and to establish truth. Hence, either aim may be made the more prominent. In pro-

Its negative character is to be attended to principally.

pounding the system, it was right to lay most stress on the positive establishment of truth, and to be more solicitous about building up the propositions than about overthrowing the counter-propositions. But now, in reviewing the system, it will be proper to reverse this order, and to attend more to the errors which the system corrects than to the truth which it substantiates. The counter-propositions shall now be made to take the lead,—those set forth in the epistemology being, of course, the first to be surveyed.

The first step which the system takes in its negative or polemical character.

5. Looking at the system from this point of view, the reader will remark that the first step which the Institutes take, is the ascertainment of the subjects or topics in reference to which natural thinking and psychology are at fault. These general topics are—first, Knowing and the Known; secondly, Ignorance; and, thirdly, Being. These themes are all-comprehensive: every truth and every error which any intellect can harbour, must find a place under one or other of these heads; and these, accordingly, are the departments into which philosophy is divided, inasmuch as these are the provinces where error has to be uprooted, and truth planted.

The next step which the system takes in its negative or polemical character.

6. These three heads having been laid down as the general topics in reference to which error and contradiction prevail, the system then proceeds to search out these errors and contradictions, and to deal with them separately and in detail—the first

aim of the inquiry, when it descends to these specialties, being to bring to light the leading or capital contradiction out of which all the others proceed.

7. The fundamental error of natural or ordinary thinking is found by the system to consist in an oversight of the primary law or condition of all knowledge. Natural thinking overlooks the necessity to which all intelligence is subject in the acquisition of knowledge—the necessity, namely, of apprehending *itself* along with whatever it apprehends. This oversight is equivalent to a denial, and, tested by the criterion of necessary truth, it amounts to a contradiction. It is tantamount to the assertion that a thing is *not* what it *is*—that "A is not A." Because, in asserting that knowledge can take place without its essential condition being complied with, it affirms that knowledge can be, without being knowledge, (see Introduction, § 28). This contradiction, which is largely countenanced, if not formally ratified, by psychology, is the parent, proximately or remotely, of all the other contradictions which are corrected in the course of the system. It is embodied in Counter-proposition I., and subverted by the corresponding proposition — the fundamental article of the Institutes. The subject must not only *know*, but must *be known* along with, all that comes before it. This single principle reforms the whole character of human thought. Its affirmation is the

The capital contradiction which the epistemology brings to light and corrects.

groundwork of all the truths which the system subsequently advances: its denial is the mother of all the errors which the system subsequently overthrows.

The second contradiction which it corrects.

8. The contradictory inadvertency in regard to the primary *law* of knowledge leads directly to a contradictory inadvertency in regard to the *object* of knowledge. This latter contradiction obtains expression in the second counter-proposition, which asserts that objects can be known without a subject or self being known along with them. Proposition II., which is an immediate offshoot from Proposition I., corrects this error, and replaces it by a necessary truth of reason.

The third contradiction which it corrects.

9. The next contradiction which the system corrects is the supposition that the unit or minimum of cognition can, in any case, consist of *less* than an objective part and a subjective part. Psychology holds that the objective part of a cognition can be known by itself, and that the subjective part of a cognition can be known by itself; or, at any rate, that each of them is a unit or minimum of knowledge. Proposition III. corrects this contradiction (which is merely a more explicit form of Counter-proposition II.), by showing that the two parts, objective and subjective *together*, are required to make up the unit or minimum of cognition, and that each factor by

itself is necessarily *less* than can be known by any intelligence.

10. Counter-propositions IV. and V. express contradictions which are merely more special examples of those which have gone before. Natural thinking advocates our knowledge of material things *per se*, and psychology, if it abandons this position, contends, at any rate, for our knowledge of certain material qualities *per se*. This contradiction is one which it is of the utmost importance to point out and correct, inasmuch as it is the basis of materialism—a system which, if it could be substantiated, and an independent existence accorded to material things, would extinguish all the brightest hopes and loftiest aspirations of our nature. The counter-propositions, however, in which these errors are embodied, are effectually subverted by Propositions IV. and V., by which matter *per se* and the material qualities *per se* are reduced to the contradictory or absurd.

The fourth and fifth contradictions which it corrects.

11. At this place it is proper to remark that, although a close connection subsists among all the propositions on the one hand, and all the counter-propositions on the other hand, still there is a stricter affinity among some of them than among others. They fall naturally into groups; and the system has periodical resting-places where it pauses for a moment, and from whence it again flows forward

The propositions and counter-propositions fall into groups.

with an accession of strength. One of these pauses occurs at the end of Proposition V. The first five propositions, and their corresponding counter-propositions, are to be regarded as forming a group or family which, although closely related to those which follow, are still more closely related among themselves. The groups into which the subsequent propositions and counter-propositions fall shall be indicated as we proceed.

The sixth contradiction which the epistemology corrects.

12. The error brought to light in Counter-proposition VI. is the supposition that the knowledge of particular things can precede the knowledge of universals, or rather of *a* universal (the *me*). If this counter-proposition were true, the refutation of the preceding counter-propositions would, of course, go for nothing, and materialism would be triumphant. The corrective proposition, however, proves that there must be a universal or common, as well as a particular or peculiar, ingredient in every cognition; and that, consequently, we can have no knowledge of the particular prior to our knowledge of the universal. This proposition is very important, on account of the historical notices connected with it, and the psychological fallacies (Realism, Conceptualism, and Nominalism) which it demolishes.

13. The next contradiction involved in natural thinking, and countenanced by psychology, is the

notion that the ego, or oneself, is, or may be, a special or particular object of cognition, just as material things are supposed to be special or particular objects of cognition. Proposition VII. corrects this error by showing that the ego can be known *only* as the common or universal element in every cognition, just as matter is known as the particular or peculiar element of some cognitions.

The seventh contradiction which it corrects.

14. Counter-proposition VIII. declares that the ego, or mind, may possibly be known to be material. This affirmation is proved to be contradictory by the corresponding proposition, which derives its data of proof from Propositions VI. and VII. These three Propositions (VI. VII. VIII.) form a distinct group, and might be studied with advantage even out of their relation to the system, as affording the only argument by which the materiality of the mind can be disproved, and its immateriality put upon a right and intelligible footing.

The eighth contradiction which it corrects.

15. The ninth contradiction which the system corrects is found in the assertion that the ego or mind is knowable *per se*, or in a state of pure indetermination. Proposition IX. gives expression to the true doctrine on this point.

The ninth contradiction which it corrects.

16. The contradiction embodied in Counter-proposition X. is one which called for correction, more im-

peratively, perhaps, than any other error which these Institutes have brought to light and refuted. The doctrine that the senses by themselves are, to some extent, faculties of cognition, and not mere capacities of nonsense, has operated more fatally on the cause of speculative truth, and has retarded the progress of philosophy more effectually, than any other blunder presented in the manifold aberrations of psychology. This doctrine is proved to be contradictory by Proposition X., and expunged, it is to be hoped, for ever from the pages of metaphysical science.

The tenth contradiction which it corrects.

17. At Proposition XI. the system takes a fresh start,—puts forth a new articulation. Hitherto the system has controverted the contradictions incident to popular *knowledge;* now it controverts the contradictions incident to popular *thinking*, laying down the distinction between knowing and thinking, presentation and representation, which is described in p. 285. The three contradictions embodied in Counter-propositions XI. XII. XIII., and corrected by the corresponding propositions, are introduced lest the student should suppose that thought is competent to perform what knowledge is inadequate to overtake. This opinion is loosely entertained by ordinary thinking, and formally adopted by psychology; and therefore it was necessary to controvert it expressly. This refutation is effected by Propositions XI. XII. XIII., which form one group or family.

The eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth contradictions which it corrects.

18. The contradictions which prevail on the subject of "the phenomenal and the substantial in cognition," "the relative and the absolute in cognition" —errors which originate wholly, although remotely, in the fundamental contradiction expressed in Counter-proposition I., and which enjoy the special advocacy of psychology—are corrected in Propositions XIV. XV. XVI. XVII. XVIII. XIX. XX. XXI. And Proposition XXII., with which the epistemology concludes, has for its object the separation of the necessary laws (to which expression is given in the twenty-one preceding propositions) from the contingent laws of cognition. The main purpose of Proposition XXII. is to show that the Absolute in *our* cognition is not, of necessity, the Absolute in *all* cognition, except in so far *as its essentials* are concerned; that is to say, except to this extent, that it (the absolute, namely, and substantial in *all* cognition) must consist of these two elements—whatever their nature may be—a subject and an object *together*. So much, then, in regard to the contradictions affecting "Knowing and the Known," which the epistemology subverts, and in regard to the truths which it substitutes in their room. The popular and psychological errors in respect to ignorance have next to be passed under review.

The remaining contradictions which it corrects.

19. The leading contradiction which the agnoiology corrects consists in the affirmation, express or

The leading contradiction which the agnoiology corrects.

implied, that there can be an ignorance of that of which there can be no knowledge. When tested by the criterion of necessary truth, the contradictory character of this assertion is obvious. It amounts to a denial that ignorance is ignorance. Because ignorance is a defect; but no defect is involved in not knowing what is *not to be* known on any terms by any intelligence. And therefore to affirm that a nescience of the absolutely unknowable is ignorance, is to affirm that ignorance is no defect; in other words, is to affirm that ignorance is not ignorance,—is not what it is. This error is embodied in Counter-proposition III. of the agnoiology, and refuted in the corresponding proposition, which is the feeding truth of this section of the science.

The derivative contradictions which it corrects.

20. The capital contradiction which the agnoiology exposes, yields as its progeny the following swarm of contradictions: First, that there can be an ignorance of objects without a subject, (Counter-proposition IV.); secondly, that there can be ignorance of material things *per se*, (Counter-proposition V.); thirdly, that there can be an ignorance of the universal without the particular, and of the particular without the universal, (Counter-proposition VI.); and, fourthly, that there can be an ignorance of the ego *per se*, or of the subject without any object, (Counter-proposition VII.) Each of these errors is articulately refuted by its appropriate pro-

position on the general ground that there can be no ignorance of that which is absolutely unknowable.

21. The concluding contradiction which the agnoiology despatches, consists in the denial that object *plus* a subject is the only possible object of ignorance. This denial is expressed in Counter-proposition VIII.; and in opposition to it, the corrective proposition proves that this synthesis is the only thing of which there can be any ignorance, inasmuch as it is the only thing of which there can be any knowledge. It shows that nothing but this synthesis can be ignored, because nothing but this synthesis can be known. The contradictions corrected in the ontology have now to be considered.

The concluding contradiction which it corrects.

22. Natural thinking has an ontology of its own. It asserts the absolute existence of material things *per se*, if not, also, the absolute existence of immaterial minds *per se*. Psychology is less consistent. At times it makes common cause with ordinary thinking, and adopts and confirms "the science of Being," which it receives at the hands, and on the authority, of popular belief. It contends for the absolute existence of matter by itself, and of mind by itself. Then again it vacillates, and declares that there can be no science of that which absolutely exists—grounding its denial on our alleged ignorance of "Being in itself."

The opinions entertained by natural thinking, and to some extent by psychology, on the subject of "Being."

How the ontology goes to work in exposing the contradictions involved in these opinions.

23. To correct the contradictions contained in these opinions, whether natural or psychological, the first step which this section of the science takes is to determine exhaustively the characters of absolute existence, (Prop. I., Ontol.) The next step which it takes is to eliminate or clear off one of the alternatives; and the conclusion reached is, that Absolute Existence is either that which we know, or that which we are ignorant of. This operation occupies the ontology from Proposition II. to Proposition V. inclusive.

Exposure and refutation of these contradictions.

24. The successful performance of this operation makes everything *safe*. It renders the system impregnable in defence, and irresistible in attack. It brings to light, and at the same time refutes, the contradictions entertained by natural thinking in regard to Absolute Existence. Natural thinking holds that material things *per se* have an absolute existence, (Counter-proposition VI.); that particular things have an absolute existence, (Counter-proposition VII.); that minds *per se* have an absolute existence, (Counter-proposition VIII.) These assertions are annihilated by their antagonist Propositions, VI. VII. VIII., by means of the consideration that what absolutely exists *must be* either that which we know, or that which we are ignorant of. But matter *per se*, the particular *per se*, the ego *per se*, are what we neither know nor are ignorant of (as has been de-

monstrated in the course of the epistemology and the agnoiology); and these, therefore, are not things which absolutely exist, or of which true and substantial Being can be predicated without giving utterance to a contradiction.

25. The ninth counter-proposition expresses the common, and to a large extent the psychological, opinion in regard to the origin of knowledge. It declares that matter is the cause of our perceptive cognitions. But this opinion is contradictory, because matter cannot be the *cause* of our cognitions, inasmuch as it is a mere *part* of our cognitions, as stated in the demonstration of the corrective proposition.

The ninth contradiction which the ontology corrects.

26. The tenth counter-proposition is a mere repetition of counter-propositions VI. VII. VIII. It is introduced because it is the antagonist proposition to Proposition X., which overthrows it, and demonstrates what, and what alone, absolutely exists. It is conceived that the conclusion established by this proposition (a conclusion which is equally infallible, whether absolute existence be that which we know, or that which we are ignorant of)—namely, that minds *together with what they apprehend* are the only veritable existences, and that minds without any apprehensions, and apprehensions without any mind, are mere absurdities—is so far from being an obnoxious or extravagant conclusion, that it is, on

The tenth contradiction which the ontology corrects.

the contrary, in the highest degree consonant with the dictates of an enlightened common-sense, and gratifying to feelings at once sober and exalted.

The eleventh contradiction which the ontology corrects.

27. And lastly, the eleventh counter-proposition gives expression to the atheistic conclusion into which ordinary thinking and psychology inevitably fall, after performing their descent through the whole preceding series of contradictions. The counter-propositions hang organically together, and form a coherent chain no less than the propositions; and this, the last link in the series, traces its genealogy in a long but unbroken line up to the cardinal contradiction set forth in the first counter-proposition of the epistemology—just as the proposition by which it is overthrown, and the truth of theism established, owes its whole strength to the first proposition of that section of the science. The crowning contradiction, which the system corrects by means of Proposition XI., is the supposition that the material universe by itself is non-contradictory, and accordingly is, or may be, self-subsistent and eternal.

By the correction of these contradictions, the system has redeemed its pledge.

28. Such then are the cardinal contradictions incident to natural thinking, and confirmed by psychological science; and such, in brief, is the manner in which they have been pointed out and corrected by these Institutes. Accordingly, it is submitted that the system has executed the work which it under-

took, and has redeemed the principal pledge which it held out at the commencement.

29. By the foregoing summary, in which the system has been exhibited mainly in its polemical character as corrective of the contradictions incident to popular opinion, the utility of the science of metaphysics is placed in a conspicuous light. If philosophy were a science which aimed merely at the positive establishment of certain truths of its own, without having for its vocation to challenge and put right the fundamental verdicts of man's natural judgment, the study of it might, not unreasonably, be declined on the ground that, by the exercise of our ordinary faculties, we were already in possession of as much truth as we wanted, or as was good for us. If truth comes to us spontaneously, why should we not be satisfied with it; why should we fatigue ourselves in the pursuit of any other truth than that which comes to us from nature? Why, indeed? But what if no truth, what if nothing but error, comes to us from nature; what if the ordinary operation of our faculties involves us in interminable contradictions, and lands us in atheism at last? In that case, it is conceived that the usefulness of philosophy, as corrective of these spontaneous fallacies, and as emendatory of the inherent infirmities of the human intellect, cannot be too highly estimated, or its study too earnestly recommended. The utility of philosophical study.

As a discipline of necessary and demonstrated truth.

30. Its importance is greatly enhanced by the consideration, that, when rightly cultivated, it deals only with necessary and demonstrated truths. Its conclusions are not optional opinions, to be embraced or not as people please: they are insuperable necessities of thinking, to understand which is to assent to them. Truth grounded on mere probable evidence is ever obnoxious to vicissitude; its acceptance or rejection is determined by the humours or idiosyncrasies of individual minds; it comes home to us more forcibly at one time than at another. It varies with the variations of our feelings and our partialities. But the demonstrated truths of philosophy stand exempt from all these disturbing influences. They enlist in their favour neither wishes nor desires. They appeal not to the feelings of men, but simply to their catholic reason. The mind may fall away from them; but they can never fall away. Human passion cannot obscure them; human weakness cannot infect them; but, when once established, they enjoy for ever an immunity from all those mutations to which the truths of mere contingency are exposed.

THE END.

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